YOUNG BOLSHOI DANCERS

ARTICLE BY JEROME ROBBINS

# BALLET TODAY

OCTOBER, 1959

TWO SHILLINGS

H.S.H. PRINCESS ANTOINETTE OF MONACO
presenting the Anton Dolin Awards

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# Ballet TODAY

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No. 8 VOL. 12

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SOLE AGENTS: Australasia: Gordon & Gotch Ltd.; South Africa: Central News Agency Ltd.; Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland: Kingstons Ltd.; U.S.A.: Globe Newsdealers Distributing Co., 150 Lafayette Street, New York 13, N.Y.

Printed by Richard Madley Ltd., 54 Grafton Way, W.1, England.

# Editor's Log

*Cover Portrait: left to right*
FREDERICK ASHTON, C.B.E., MISS NADIA NERINA OF THE ROYAL BALLET, JOHN GILPIN OF FESTIVAL BALLET AND H.S.H. THE PRINCESS ANTOINETTE OF MONACO.

YOUR faithful reporter left London in late August for a holiday in the South of France, so that *Editor's Log* this month rather tends to become a record of events missed rather than those accepted. London becomes busier every year in the two peak holiday months (balletically speaking) and this year was no exception. With the Royal Ballet at the Opera House and Festival Ballet at Festival Hall running very full programmes from 17th August until both their seasons ended on the 12th September, critics found themselves again this year pounding back and forth between the two, and trying to take in the Edinburgh Festival during the period as well. The Jerome Robbins Company took over at the Piccadilly Theatre for a week commencing 14th September, after highly successful seasons at the Spoleto and Edinburgh Festivals, and now, as we go to press London has no ballet on until the Royal Ballet open up their new season at the Royal Opera House on the 19th October.

## DOLIN AWARDS

I did manage to get along to the presentation of the Dolin awards on the 18th August. Mr. Dolin, in making known the reasons for his choice, paid fine tribute to the recipients (reported in *Backstage* this issue). After the formal presentation I was invited to a small private reception which followed, and this time I heard others paying tribute to Mr. Dolin. Her Serene Highness Princess Antoinette of Monaco (sister of Prince Rainier), who presented the awards, told me that when she has the opportunity she flies wherever she can to see ballet, in which she has a keen interest. "For me" she said, "there is magic in this Company. Mr. Dolin has trained the dancers rigidly, but allowed them sufficient latitude to enable them to project their youthful spontaneity, keenness and warmth across the footlights." Her Highness also told me of the wonderful reception accorded to Festival Ballet when they appear in the Principality, "and" she added "when I go backstage I feel as if I am one of the family."

Princess Antoinette came to London with her two daughters, Elizabeth who is 12 and now taking ballet lessons, Christiane Alix, 8, and her son Christian Louis, 10. After attending two performances at the Royal Festival Hall, one of Festival Ballet in *London Morning*, the new Noel Coward ballet, and the Markova-Skouratoff *Giselle* the following evening, the Princess left London with her children for a holiday in Scotland.

## WISE CHOICE

Personally, I am of the opinion that Mr. Dolin made a very wise choice. If he had limited this to those within his own Company the awards would be worthless, and in time deteriorate into a dreary presentation down the line until everyone possessed this Oscar of the ballet world. There are those who criticise Mr. Dolin for awarding statuettes of himself (in the role of Albrecht), but there is another side to the story. As readers will be aware, *Ballet Today* runs a series on the careers of the dancers, and one of the leading questions asked by our interviewers is "how did you begin a career in ballet." So many, many times, from so many parts of the world, the answer has been "Anton Dolin noticed me."

I believe that Mr. Dolin was absolutely sincere when he said that he wanted to pay tribute to the talents of others "whilst he was alive, not when he was dead and gone." To receive these awards will mean much to dancers throughout the world to whom his name is a legend and his life's work an example.

## FESTIVAL BALLET

In the world of theatre, Festival Ballet's season, which came to a close in mid-September, would be termed a "smash hit." Festival Hall was packed night after night and the performances of *London Morning*, the Noel Coward ballet, had to be almost doubled to meet the demand for seats. Whether the guardsmen outside Buckingham Palace had been to see the ballet, or whether Noel Coward knew more about the trials of being a guardsman than we do, we shall never know, but two cases were reported soon after the ballet opened, one of a guardsman kicking a tourist (later denied, but how many must have longed to do just this!) and a second case of one cracking an inquisitive child with his rifle butt, by accident, of course. Anyway, it was all good publicity and fun. I have never heard such roars of good-natured laughter coming from a ballet audience, nor for that matter, such tumultous applause at the end.

Festival Ballet will open in Copenhagen on 21st October, followed by appearances in Malmo, Stockholm, Germany and Italy, returning to London in December prior to their Christmas season at the Royal Festival Hall when they once again present *The Nutcracker*.

## THE ROYAL BALLET

Georgina Parkinson, a young soloist of the Royal Ballet, starred in the new ballet *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* by Andrée Howard, because of a foot injury to the Canadian dancer Lynn Seymour, for whom it was originally planned six months ago. Recently the young Canadian sprained an ankle and it was thought that the injury would heal in time, but she was unable to dance for a few weeks when the ballet had its première in London on September 2nd.

Geogina Parkinson has been a member of the Royal Ballet for four years, and was a student at the Royal Ballet School for four years. She will go on a 13-week tour of England and Scotland to dance this role. Her partner for the three London performances was Donald MacLeary, as originally cast; on the tour the role will be danced by Christopher Gable.

A new ballet **Antigone** by John Cranko is to open the autumn season by the Royal Ballet on October 19. Adapted from Racine's play *Les Freres Ennemis*, it includes a large number of characters not to be found in Sophocles' version of the famous Greek legend.

The Greek composer Mikis Theodorakis has been specially commissioned to write the music, and the scenery and costumes are by the celebrated Mexican artist Ruffino Tamayo. Neither has worked for the English theatre before. The ballet, which is in one long act, takes place in Thebes, and the part of Antigone is to be played by Svetlana Beriosova. Michael Somes will play Creon, David Blair Polynices and Gary Burne Etiocles. The all-star cast will also include Julia Farron, Ronald Hynd and Donald MacLeary.

## NIKITINA'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Perhaps the nicest thing about being connected with the dance is that no matter in

# News from here and there

### COMPLETING THE TRIO

When Covent Garden re-opened on 17th August for a four-week season by the Royal Ballet a new row of 35 gilt candelabra were to be seen on the front of the third tier. This completed the original scheme of the architect Edward Barry who designed the theatre in 1858 and whose plan provided for a row of candelabra on each of the three tier fronts to light the series of decorative figures depicting The Three Ages of Woman, but either shortage of time or money prevented the top row intended to light "Woman as a Child" from being installed. Now, 101 years later, a group of lovers of Covent Garden have provided the money for the extra row. The list of 22 contributors is headed by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother. Other alterations being made include re-seating the amphitheatre and additions to the stage lighting and mechanics.

**Norman Dixon** choreographed the first performance in the British Isles of the Rimsky Korsakov opera *May Night* given by the Welsh National Opera in Cardiff on 28th September.

**Jim Ranger,** one of the founders of the Sunday Ballet Club, has announced his engagement to actress Joy Leslie. They are to be married on October 17th. The next Sunday Ballet Club programme is expected to take place in November.

### ROYAL BALLET FILMSTRIP

A firm in Wakefield, Yorkshire, have made a filmstrip comprising 36 frames which deals briefly with the history of classical ballet, the work of the Royal Ballet School, backstage at Covent Garden before and during a performance, and illustrations of the ground plan of Act II of *Swan Lake.* Both the film strip and the pamphlet published for use with it have been compiled and edited by E. J. Tytler. The price is 16s. 6d.

### WILFRIED HOFMANN

Congratulations to Dr. Wilfried Hofmann, our critic in Munich for the past three years, who has received a fellowship of Harvard University. Before leaving for the U.S.A. Dr. Hofmann paid a brief visit to London and the Edinburgh Festival. Miss Ingeborg Zürner will be reporting the news from Munich during Dr. Hofmann's absence.

### WALTER GORE

Walter Gore, writing to apologise for the non-arrival of his article on Ashley Dukes (which we promised our readers last month), told me that he left Frankfurt in August and was on his way to Oslo to make a ballet for the Opera Ballet there. He is also hoping to form a Group again, smaller than his previous company.

### JANET SINCLAIR AND LEO KERSLEY

Janet Sinclair, our critic in Amsterdam for the past six years, has now returned to this country with husband Leo Kersley, who opens his own ballet school in Harlow, Essex.

The school opened with a lecture-demonstration by Mr. Kersley (who has been teaching in Holland) and Nadia Nerina of the Royal Ballet graced the occasion with her presence.

It was with Leo Kersley that Miss Nerina danced her first leading roles when she first came to England.

Mr. Kersley will be the author of an article on Miss Nerina to be published in our next issue.

### LUISILLO

Luisillo and his Spanish Dance Theatre at present touring Spanish cities under the auspices of the Ministerio de Informacion y Turismo, have been appearing at the following Festivals: Cordoba, San Sebastian, Vigo, Valladolid and Badajoz.

On Sept. 22nd the company appeared at the Eslava Theatre, Madrid. Oct. 5th-25th they will be at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées, Paris and from Nov. 2nd-22nd the Olympia Theatre, Dublin. After which they tour France. On Jan. 3rd, 1960, they begin a season in Israel and from Jan. 31st, 1960, the company begins a European tour of France, Italy and Switzerland.

### FESTIVAL BALLET CLUB

In April this year London's Festival Ballet Club reached its second birthday, and it is encouraging to note that it now numbers over a thousand members. Like so many of us in these difficult times however, they find they have had to increase their annual subscriptions, and an Extraordinary General Meeting is to be held in October to make this effective at 12s. 6d. for General Members and 7s. 6d. for Junior Members. There have been several changes, Mr. Rosser James, their very able Chairman, found he was unable to stand again and Mr. Peter Graham was elected in his place. Miss Shirley Godden, who founded the Club, was succeeded by Miss Edna M. Peters as Secretary. Both Mr. Rosser James and Miss Godden were elected as Vice-Presidents.

### BERMUDA

Madame Ana Roje, prima ballerina of the Yugoslav State Ballet and Myles Marsden, premier dancer of the same company, at Bermuda's outdoor Festival Theatre, appeared in the roles of *Romeo and Juliet.* The version presented during Bermuda's Ballet Week (August 24th-29th) is set to Prokofiev's music, with choreography by Margarita Frohman. It is performed by only two companies in the world—the Bolshoi Ballet, and the Yugoslav State Ballet. Ballet Week was presented by the Bermuda Broadcasting Company in conjunction with the Bermuda Music and Dramatic Society as their respective contributions to the colony's 350th anniversary year celebrations.

### EDITOR'S LOG

*Continued from previous page*

which part of the world you find yourself you will not be there long before some familiar face will loom up before you. This time it was Alice Nikitina, star of Diaghilev's Russian Ballet whom I encountered on my holiday as we both sunned ourselves on the famous Monte Carlo beach.

Unversed in the obscure art of publisher's "blurb" writers, Nikitina was distressed that a number of statements had appeared on the dust jacket of her autobiography (recently published) without her knowledge, and certain acknowledgments had been omitted, amongst them the fact that the original painting of Nikitina reproduced on the dust jacket was made by F. Beltran Massés, a Spanish painter who before his death painted many famous people including Douglas Fairbanks and the Rothschilds.

The book, entitled *Nikitina* (reviewed by Pigeon Crowle in our July issue) is selling well and negotiations are proceeding to publish it in French and Italian.

Nikitina's family are all extraordinarily talented in their respective ways, two relatives being well-known writers and her brother Vladimir Landau a Davis Cup Player. Nikitina's mother and brother settled in Monte Carlo when she was dancing there with the Diaghilev ballet, but she herself now lives in Paris and has her own dancing school there. She startled the Paris dance world some time ago by starting a course for dance critics. She also inaugurated the *Prix Terpsichore,* a scholarship awarded each year in memory of Diaghilev and open to anyone in the world who cares to compete. I am happy to report that following the publicity given to her in the press, this year's winner, Andrea Link from Hamburg, was immediately signed for a very well-paid engagement to dance in Stockholm before going to Paris to commence studying under the scholarship.

*Ballet Today* will shortly introduce a new competition entitled *Balletomanes Quiz.* Madame Nikitina has agreed to commence the series.

# LONDON REVIEWS

by FERNAU HALL

## (Continuing) FESTIVAL BALLET'S LONDON SEASON

### ETUDES

The Royal Danish Ballet has in its repertoire *Conservatoire*—one act of a Bournonville ballet belonging to the middle of the last century. *Conservatoire* (which shows a stylized class) gives a very good idea of the classical training of the period, and has great merits of continuity and pace as well as a thread of story: the maître de ballet who conducts the class is a very real person with a strong personality. Harald Lander, sometime maître de ballet of the Royal Danish Ballet, was clearly inspired by *Conservatoire* when he choreographed *Etudes*, which is also a stylised version of a ballet class. But here there is no thread of story, and the different sections are clearly distinguished from each other by black-outs; the whole emphasis is on contrasts of different branches of technique and different styles of dancing, reinforced by stark lighting effects.

The beginning is rather dull and repetitive, with dreary waits in total darkness while the portable barres are moved. But then comes a very dramatic episode, with dancers doing limbering and adage work in silhouette against a bright sky-cloth, joined after a minute or so by a group of dancers stage-right doing foot-exercises in fast rhythms which make an intriguing counterpoint to the slow legato movements of the others. From this point on, the ballet maintains a reasonable standard of interest and variety, and (as it is very long for an abstract work) it would make a better impact as a whole if it began with the silhouettes.

*Etudes* was easily the most successful item in the second week's programmes of Festival Ballet's season at the Royal Festival Hall. The credit for this must go to three of the leading soloists (Toni Lander, John Gilpin and André Prokovsky). Toni Lander, having the advantage of being both Danish and the wife of Harald Lander, was in a good position to understand the choreography, and in fact did very well. She is a tall girl with an agreeable personality, a clean line and a typically Danish ability to cover the stage easily in long leaps. She was at her best in an episode in which she appeared as a kind of Sylphide (with a dash of Snow-Queen) and called to the dance (somewhat after the manner of the Queen of the Wilis) a series of other dancers who first appeared dancing as replicas of her. The slight element of story helped her to put flavour and meaning into her movements, and made one long to see her interpreting dramatic roles in Bournonville ballets. John Gilpin and André Prokovsky were both to be seen in the sort of virtuoso classical steps which suit them best; John Gilpin, as always, stopped the show with his *grande pirouette* alternating hopping turns in second and spins on balance with the raised foot in various positions.

The choreography for the corps de ballet is at times very exacting, and showed up a number of technical faults; in particular the feet of the girls were often inadequately arched. But Harald Lander works up his successive climaxes of virtuosity with such skill, presenting each of the soloists in turn as the culmination of a series of entrées, that the ballet makes a strong impact in spite of defects of execution. By the end of *Etudes*, however, I always feel that the choreographer has worked up the same sort of climax too often; in fact the end needs pruning almost as much as the beginning. If Harald Lander returns to the Festival Ballet to produce something new I hope he will give some time and attention to the revision of *Etudes*, which even as it stands is one of the best things in the Festival Ballet's repertoire.

### NAPOLI

The Festival Ballet still calls *Napoli* its production of the grand divertissement from Act III of the Bournonville ballet of this name, and even the programme notes do not make clear the nature of what we are shown. There is no reason why Lander's version of the divertissement should not be presented on its own—in fact this is a very good idea, for the rest of the ballet is rather dull—but in fairness to Bournonville and the great traditions of Danish ballet it is important that the title should make clear we are seeing only one section of *Napoli*.

There are two sections in the divertissement: the purely classical section (in which we see a series of solos, pas de deux, pas de trois and so on) and what one might call the demi-caractère section, in which the dancers carry tambourines and perform classicized versions of Neapolitan folk-dances which Bournonville had studied in Italy. Both sections are highly characteristic of Bournonville's work, and the children training for the Royal Danish Ballet become immersed in the Bournonville traditions by watching this divertissement from a bridge across the stage. It was scarcely possible to throw such a bridge across the Festival Hall's stage, but at least we had the fine Danish dancer Toni Lander (as Teresina) to show how Bournonville enchainements should be performed. In spite of all her cosmopolitan experience she is still very Danish, leaping splendidly, landing softly, and executing beats with great vivacity—the whole time showing admirable verve and enthusiasm. She is also typically Danish in having rather slow pirouettes: the modern fast turn on the full pointe was not invented in Bournonville's day, and has not yet been fully assimilated into the Danish school. (I noticed one of the corps de ballet girls doing pirouettes on the half pointe: this is true to Bournonville, and looks right in its context.)

André Prokovsky gave a good account of himself in his solo items, doing double tours and beats with his usual brilliance; but his partnering left a good deal to be desired: this is a weakness on which he should concentrate for a time. He also looked like a fish out of water during the one small scene of dramatic action, when Genaro is supposed to become jealous of his bride (Teresina) who dances a Tarantella with another man. Börge Ralov was very convincingly Neapolitan in this role, quickly rising to a passion of fury and almost throwing the other man out of his way as he took over and swept Teresina into a fiery pas de deux; André Prokovsky merely sulked like a small boy whose candy had been taken away. There is no reason to think that he is lacking in dramatic ability: what he needs is good production.

The choreography makes severe demands on the technique of the junior soloists and corps de ballet dancers, and showed up a certain general weakness in the Festival Ballet dancers; lack of strength in the muscles extending the feet prevented them from achieving the elevation so characteristic of Danish dancers—and so much demanded by Bournonville's style.

In making his version of Act III of *Napoli* Harald Lander padded out the classical section of the divertissement with items from other Bournonville ballets. This was not a good idea, for repetition of the same sort of item does not add to the excitement; in fact it detracts from it. It is very noticeable that the ballet goes with a swing when Lander keeps fairly close to the original—in the second (demi-caractère) section of the divertissement. From the beginning of this section right up to the end of the ballet the choreography maintains variety and contrast very well, and shows clearly Bournonville's mastery of this sort of choreography.

### THREE GISELLES

It could have been overpowering to see three performances of *Giselle* by the same company in two days. But the three Giselles and the two Albrechts differed from each other to such a fantastic extent that the result was fascinating.

On Friday, 21st August, we saw Yvette Chauviré from Paris. A year ago this great artist gave a wonderful performance at Covent Garden which was very much her own and yet was self-consistent and true to the story and the choreography. But things were rather different at the Festival Hall. For one thing, she danced without as much freedom or grace as usual, making little of Giselle's wonderfully soaring steps. For another, she changed her interpretation considerably, in ways which were false to the development of the story. In Act I, for example, she took the episode in Dolin's

production where Giselle gives signs of a weak heart and built this up into such a long scene of heavy bravura acting that it quite upset the balance of Act 1: in fact it was hard to understand why Albrecht did not stop the dance and send for a doctor. In her mad scene she made Giselle's recapitulation of her dance with Albrecht so violent (running right across the music) that all poignancy was lost. There were sequences (particularly in Act II) where she recaptured the old magic; but these came all too seldom. It is easy to understand why a great dancer like Chauviré should wish to change her interpretation to suit a different production, and one can only regret that she took a wrong turning on crossing the river.

She was partnered by John Gilpin, who laid his main stress on dancing rather than acting. Inevitably he made his most striking effects towards the end of Act II, when Albrecht is forced to keep on dancing until he nearly dies of exhaustion.

Markova danced Giselle at the following Saturday matinée. Her interpretation is now firmly set, and changes little from company to company or year to year; in fact it is clear that she has worked out a way of dancing Giselle which will suit her for a good many years to come. Unlike some others, I can find no period quality in this interpretation: to me, it is a perfect representation of Markova's own personality and her individual approach to the art of ballet. We know, for example, that the great ballerinas who interpreted Giselle at the time of the ballet's creation had very strong techniques, and criticisms of the time show that they danced the role in a full-blooded way. Markova, in contrast, reduces most of the steps to pale shadows of themselves. It is interesting in this connection that she makes a fine effect in the middle of Act I, when she unexpectedly launches herself into a difficult solo with all the attack demanded by the choreography: here Giselle performs certain steps (notably double turns *en attitude*) which must be done with attack or not at all. In this solo (as in her excellent mad scene) Markova creates a romantic effect which suggested interesting parallels with paintings of the Giselle period in the Romantic Exhibition at the Tate Gallery.

Her Albrecht was Vladimir Skouratoff from Paris. This fine artist disappeared from view about a year ago after an accident in which he broke an Achilles tendon. It was clear on 22nd August that he had not quite fully recovered his previous form; but his acting was so good that this scarcely mattered. I have never seen an Albrecht who gave such depth and psychological complexity to the role: in fact he reminded one time and again of Hamlet ( a very romantic character). All the inconsistencies and even stupidities of Albrecht's actions fell into place as the consequence of inner conflicts and a gnawing sense of guilt. When, for example, he rushed at Hilarion with a drawn sword, there was no Wilfred to restrain him, as in the usual production; instead, Skouratoff's Hamlet-Albrecht stopped himself, with a sudden failure of will proceeding from his guilty feeling that Hilarion was in the right after all.

On Saturday evening Carla Fracci danced Giselle with angelic rightness and assurance, showing no sign of the fact that she had just injured her ankle: this was surely one of the finest Giselles by an Italian dancer since the days of Grisi and Cerrito. She made Giselle very young and demure, and her movements had all the right softness, warmth and simplicity: at times she looked extraordinarily like a lithograph of Grisi (who created the role). The influence of Fonteyn was clear—above all in the fast, short solo which occurs soon after Giselle's entrance in Act II—but this was in no way a laborious copy: every detail was triumphantly and spontaneously right. Even if the performance lacked the power and emotional depth which one expects from mature artists like Fonteyn or Ulanova, this did not detract in any way from its impact as something fresh and ingenuous—something very, very good of its kind. Carla Fracci is clearly an artist whose career one may follow with the keenest interest.

## CHAUVIRÉ AND GILPIN

It was exciting to see Chauviré almost completely back in form on 31st August, when she danced the Swan Queen in Act II of *Swan Lake*. She began and ended magnificently, dancing with great dignity and making the Swan Queen's final exit very moving; moreover she kept close to Ivanov's choreography, allowing it to shine out in its true colours and making only the subtle changes which every good artist contrives to adapt it to her own physique (such as crossing her wrists). In some of her phrasing in the solos and pas de deux she showed a certain wilfulness, notably in neglecting to fill out Tchaikovsky's broad melodies and hurrying on ahead of the beat; but there were other times when her phrasing was admirable. She presents a rather baffling figure as an artist: she has great gifts, and a most unusual personality, but some interior demon seems to drive her at times to damage her own finest creations.

Later that evening I felt sorry for Louis Godfrey, André Prokovsky and Michael Hogan dancing alongside John Gilpin in *Variations for Four:* though the first three all have talent and look well on their own, Gilpin's dancing has a unique quality which makes almost any other male dancing look rough and clumsy. It is as if a great castrato singer from the eighteenth century had been re-incarnated and put to sing

Toni Lander and André Prokovsky in *Don Quixote*
*Photo:* Houston Rogers

alongside tenors and counter-tenors of today. Not that there is anything effeminate about Gilpin's dancing: on the contrary, it has the power characteristic of the male physique. But at the same time—like a castrato voice—it has the suppleness, ease and agility one normally associated with women artists, together with a special sort of brilliance all its own. Strangely enough Gilpin never looks entirely happy in the deployment of his unique talents: his smile, for example, comes and goes in a very erratic way. What he needs, perhaps, is for a choreographer to invent a role which would use his talents to say something quite new: I imagine him as some supernatural being outside time and space.

## COPPELIA

Harald Lander's production of *Coppélia* (1st September) is very disappointing. This ballet in its traditional choreography (containing elements of the work of Saint-Léon, Petipa, Ivanov and Cecchetti, surviving from a long series of productions in Russia) should be well suited to the talents of the Festival Ballet; Lander's version, on the other hand, would suit no company in the world. The humour has been coarsened, the men made into hooligans, the beautiful solos and pas de deux replaced by formless collections of enchainements, and the character dances with definite flavours of the dances of different countries replaced by collections of dull stamping steps in crude rhythms which belong to no country in particular. Many of the costumes are intolerably lacking in taste: what is one to make of men (supposed to be peasants) dressed in plain white tights and vests, with a tiny bolero over the shoulders as the only concession to the style, period and place of the ballet?

Marilyn Burr made a pert Swanilda, dancing with both energy and neatness, but was crippled by the unsuitable choreography. Perhaps the most baffling thing about this production is that the Royal Danish Ballet has its own production of *Coppélia*, dating from the end of the nineteenth century: this has many good qualities, and Lander could easily have revived it for the Festival Ballet.

## LONDON MORNING REVISITED

Having now seen *London Morning* many times in succession, I realize that I was unjust to Jack Carter when I suggested in the September issue that a mistake was made in allotting the choreography to him in view of his lack of invention. In fact he gave proof of invention in *The Witch Boy*, and in different circumstances might have made something really witty and satirical out of *London Morning*. But clearly Noel Coward wanted a balletic equivalent of *Cavalcade*—something unlikely to appeal to any young choreographer of today. The result was that Jack Carter, caught between the demands of his medium and the rather simple and sentimental ideas of his librettist, was put in an impossible position. Under the circumstances he did rather better than one could have expected.

**FESTIVAL BALLET** *continued at foot of column next page*

# EDINBURGH FESTIVAL

by FERNAU HALL

## NATIONAL BALLET OF FINLAND

IT was a disturbing but fascinating experience to pass in one day (5th September) from a matinée at the Empire Theatre—with the National Ballet of Finland—to an evening performance at the King's Theatre—with the Royal Opera, Stockholm. In a space-time distance of two hours and one mile I found myself moving from the Petipa era right up to a convincing and highly contemporary evocation of the future.

Though a ballet school was started by the Russians in Helsingfors eighty years ago, the Finnish National Ballet dates back only to 1921; as in a good many countries it owes origin to an influx of Russian refugee dancers and teachers after the Russian Revolution of 1917. Since then, however, progress has been slower than in a good many other countries, probably because no outstanding Finnish choreographer has emerged. The present maître de ballet, George Gé. was born in 1893 in St. Petersburg of a Finno-Swedish family; he was the first maître de ballet when the Finnish State Ballet was formed in 1921 as a section of the Finnish State Opera. After leaving Finland he worked for a time as maître de ballet of the Swedish Opera, and spent a number of years working in operetta at the Chatelet in Paris before returning to the Finnish Ballet a few years ago. His choreography (represented at Edinburgh by a production of *Don Quichotte*) is sentimental and banal in the late nineteenth-century manner: the chief characters such as Kitri and Mercedes were hardly distinguishable from each other, and the story-line made no sense at all. Fortunately Heikki Vartsi saved the day by his witty and grotesque dancing in the role of Sancho Panza.

In *Circle of Roses*, with music based on Finnish folk-dances and folk-songs, it seemed reasonable to hope to see something recognizably Finnish; but this proved to be a very dull melodrama involving The Girl, The Boy, The Rival, The Neighbour Girl and Gypsies, with a knife fight and some extremely dull attempts at the suggestion of folk-steps; in fact it might have been presented by an amateur ballet club in almost any country: there was no evidence that the choreographer (Elsa Sylvertersson) had undertaken any serious study of Finnish folk-lore. Significantly she had the girls dancing in pointe-shoes and keeping to ballet steps, while the boys wore character shoes.

The present repertoire consists mainly of the familiar full-length Tchaikovsky ballets, together with *Giselle;* but a production is planned of a ballet based on the great Finnish epic *Kalevala* which should help the company to develop a style of its own: at present the influence of the less happy aspects of the Bolshoi style is very prominent. The Finns are lucky in having easy access to both Russia and the West, and one may hope that eventually a great Finnish maître de ballet and choreographer will succeed in making a happy blend of elements from both sides of the Iron Curtain.

## ROYAL OPERA OF STOCKHOLM

*Aniara*, the new opera presented by the Royal Opera, Stockholm at Edinburgh, represents in many ways a decisive forward step in contemporary theatre. Here is an opera with a distinctively contemporary theme, using advanced contemporary styles of poetry, music, choreography, production and setting, presented with such extraordinary power and homogeneity that it makes an overwhelming impact even on audiences used to nothing more advanced than Puccini. In this space-ship opera such things as modern poetry, twelve-tone music and mysterious semi-abstract dancing fall into place as things which are normal and even inevitable.

One of the most important and distinctive aspects of *Aniara* is that its theme and libretto are the product of two outstanding modern poets, Harry Martinson and Erik Lindegren. The libretto is based on an "epos" by Martinson, a series of 103 poems dealing with the voyage in outer space of the space-ship *Aniara* carrying to Mars refugees from the radio-actively devastated earth. Though the period purports to be the distant future, in fact the theme is very much of our own day: the voyage in space is used as a symbol of present-day life in a spiritual void, and the scientific details are used symbolically and poetically, not in the naturalistic manner of space fiction. Anyone who has seen a space-fiction film will know how ludicrously banal can be the effect of the scientific gimmicks, in conjunction with conventional characterisation and flat dialogue: but *Aniara* belongs literally to a different world. Erik Lindegren, who adapted the "epos", has had considerable experience of the theatre—including writing libretti for two ballets choreographed by Birgit Akesson, Sweden's great free dancer—and showed the most sure and sensitive taste in building up the structure of the opera. As one might expect, choreography plays an essential role in the development of the action: one of the two chief roles, the mysterious symbolic figure Isagel, is in fact allotted to a dancer.

Up to recently Birgit Akesson (choreographer of *Aniara*) devoted herself exclusively to solo dancing, developing over a period of two decades a remarkable new technique and style with movements unlike those of any other type of dancing; in contrast to most "modern" dancing, her style is feminine and lyrical, with extreme attention to subtleties of line and tension and it belongs essentially to the second half of this century. Much of it is done in a deep plié (like some oriental dancing); at times the body is horizontal, or even upside-down. But Birgit Akesson had great difficulty when she began to compose ballets for the Royal Swedish Ballet, using dancers untrained in her technique, and her ballets had little of the poetic expressiveness of her own solo dancing. An exception was the big solo of Persephone (performed by Mariane Orlando) in the ballet *Sisyphos*, which had some good qualities, though it fell a long way behind the best dances of Akesson herself. But in the exacting role of Isagel in *Aniara*, Mariane Orlando succeeded brilliantly, in some miraculous manner, in interpreting a series of Akessonian movements in a poetic and expressive manner, giving them the right spontaneity and mystery without ever distorting them in the direction of ballet. (It was fascinating to recognize themes from a number of Akesson's best solo dances.) Orlando's big solo in Act I had insufficient variety, ending in a long series of simple spins with rotating arms that expressed very little; but in Act II she had two fine dances which perfectly expressed the darkening atmosphere. The opera ended in a superbly simple manner, with Isagel's body lying in the middle of the dead space-ship: the combination of an unseen soprano voice, a seen dancer and poetic lighting effects expressed a new mood and experience which could not have been expressed in any other way.

Another remarkable choreographic effect was made in Act II, Scene II. After years of travel various odd sects had emerged, and a group of women performed a cult dance which was lascivious and Lesbian. This was completely convincing, though representing a genre of frank eroticism quite different from anything in Birgit Akesson's previous work, and showed her coming to terms at last with group work with ballet dancers. The dances were performed with just the right combination of depravity and gusto by the corps de ballet.

The music, composed by Karl-Birger Blomdahl, was far more satisfying than his two Lindegren-Akesson ballet scores: it was clear that he has exceptional gifts for attuning himself to modern poetry and the human voice. In texture it was very varied, ranging from a satirical treatment of rock 'n' roll and pop songs to electronic effects and a mysterious symbolic style for the major role of the Blind Poetess (superbly sung by Margareta Hallin): the choreographic scenes gained enormously from the warmth of expression and clarity of meaning provided by the singing. One major defect was the length of the passages of electronic music (sounds generated by purely electronic means) and musique concrète (re-arrangement and distortion of natural sounds): these had an important dramatic function, representing messages from the dying Earth, but they went on much too long.

The sets designed by Sven Erixson were masterpieces of imaginative simplicity, giving a poetic and beautiful suggestion of the round walls of the space ship without any fussy scientific detail, and providing scope for bold lighting effects and multiple projection. In fact the sets and lighting were completely in harmony with the whole treatment of the theme.

*Aniara*, as a work of "total theatre" that is uncompromisingly modern in theme and every detail of treatment and yet highly successful with audiences, presents a challenge to every opera and ballet company in the world.

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**FESTIVAL BALLET** *Continued from page 6*

## TENTH BIRTHDAY GALA

No doubt the gala performance would in China have been called a "Double Tenth": the tenth birthday, on the tenth of September. The gala consisted of a large number of short items, intended to give opportunities to all the stars of the company (both resident and guest) and included two new items.

Unfortunately both the new items were dull. *Pièce d'Occasion*, a new pas de deux by John Cranko, looked as if it was intended to be comic: the dancers (Carla Fracci and John Gilpin) wore ballet costumes with Oriental touches, and from time to time they indulged in mock-Oriental twists of the hands, or else turned up their toes. The effect was depressingly unfunny; Gilpin looked quite lost behind his beard, and even the adorable Fracci, most spontaneous of artists, could only show a fraction of her usual joie de vivre.

Harald Lander's new ballet *Vita Eterna* proved to belong to the same unrewarding category as the Finnish State Ballet's *Circle of Roses:* arranged to Dvorak's hackneyed Slavonic Dances, it mixed classical steps with phoney character steps that bore no relation to the Slavonic character of the music. The programme gave notice of a grandiose symbolic theme "Woman's eternal dilemma in her choice of a mate", but there was little attempt to interpret this theme choreographically; in fact the men were scarcely distinguished from each other, and it was not even clear if some or all of them were supposed to be gypsies. Fortunately Toni Lander saved the day by dancing with delightful freshness, charm and lightness.

It was a pleasure to see Belinda Wright again after a two years' absence occasioned by the birth of her baby: she worked very hard to animate the rather laboured gaiety of the *Harlequinade* pas de deux.

*Continued at foot of first column page 9*

# THE ROYAL BALLET AT COVENT GARDEN

## PINEAPPLE POLL

When the Royal Ballet returned to Covent Garden in mid-August for its first season with the combined companies, it was clear that the two companies still retained a good deal of distinct identity: the one-act ballets were performed by one or the other company, with a certain flexibility in casting the major roles. This was only to be expected: apart from the difficulty of finding time to produce " integrated versions " of ballets, it was necessary to take account of the fact that corps de ballet dancers work in teams, and unity of action is impossible if the teams are re-shuffled too often.

By far the most successful of the ballets presented at the beginning of the season was *Pineapple Poll*, presented on 18th August with the touring company but with David Blair (of the Covent Garden company) in his old part of Captain Belaye. Though he had not danced it for many years, he appeared supremely confident of every detail, and in fact performed it better than ever, bringing out the humour by a number of delicious touches—such as a rather prim little walk, putting his feet down almost like a starlet in the process of being groomed. He has of course matured a good deal since he left the Theatre Ballet in 1953, and it was only to be expected that he should put more depth and force into his interpretations: what was delightful was that in doing this he retained all the child-like dead-pan freshness and spontaneity of his original interpretation.

Audrey Farris made a very vivid impression in the title role—her first major solo role at the Garden. She made it clear that she had matured greatly during the Australian tour, and now has a most remarkable stage presence as well as a striking sense of humour and a good deal of versatility. Whereas in *The Blue Rose* she managed to be at the same time sinister, voluptuous and delicately amusing, she appeared as an off-beat clown in *Pineapple Poll*, making the humour very much broader than her predecessors—and getting away with this quite happily. What is particularly satisfying is that her dramatic ability and versatility have been recognized and important roles given to her, even though her technique is by no means flawless and her features are put together in a very unconventional way. She is in fact a *belle laide* who puts on the oddest expressions and succeeds in being riotously attractive.

## BLOOD WEDDING

With the first notes of the music, as the curtain went up on the act-drop on 24th August, it was clear that *Blood Wedding* was going to gain enormously from its translation to Covent Garden: those extraordinary chords had a rasping, menacing quality which created most vividly the atmosphere of Lorca's passionate tragedy—a quality made possible by the fact that the score was at last interpreted by a full-sized orchestra. And the music (conducted expertly by John Lanchbery) maintained its impressiveness right through the ballet, establishing Denis ApIvor's score as one of the finest ballet scores of modern times. What struck me particularly was the marvellous continuity and inevitability which the music gave to the development of the action, allowing each scene exactly its right mood, tempo, rhythm and length and then carrying us on immediately to the next scene without any of the slackening of momentum and choreographic padding so familiar in dramatic ballets based on pre-existing music. This score points to the future, opening up all sorts of potentialities.

Alas, another aspect of this performance represented an end rather than a beginning: Anne Heaton, appearing as the Bride, and dancing better than ever, was making her swan-song as a dancer: at the age of 27 this great artist was being forced to retire because of arthritis in one foot. This thought might have made it intolerably sad to watch her on the stage, but she performed so superbly that she forced one to think only of the Bride (not of Anne Heaton) whenever she was on the stage, and even made one happy to think that, if she had to go, at least she was permitted to make her departure in such a satisfying way—giving three performances of her finest role.

She created, as always in this part, a most refreshing and unusual impression of a real woman, with blood in her veins and passion in her heart: something far removed from the pale conventional creatures who do duty as heroines in so many modern ballets. And an exactly corresponding impression was created by Donald Britton as Leonardo: tough, ferocious, and violent, close to the Leonardo of the play, and making the most extreme and refreshing contrast with the conventional danseur noble. From the moment the two met one could see them having an explosive effect on each other; here were two creatures driven to destroy each other by an irresistible force—the Moon's longing for blood. Together they played out their destiny with acting and dramatic dancing of great intensity which achieved more resonance than ever before—partly because they had both matured their interpretations on the Australian tour, and partly because the wide Covent Garden stage gave them space to fill out their movements.

The acting and dancing in the smaller roles gave them solid support: Audrey Farriss made a fine sullen creature out of Leonardo's wife—challenging comparison with the excellent performances in this role of Doreen Tempest; Margaret Hill gave great dignity and restraint to her anger as the bridegroom's mother; and Johaar Mosaval gave his familiar and exciting rhythmic vitality to the group dances of the men. But Michael Boulton disappointed in the part of the bridegroom: he performed the steps in a conventional way, as if they belonged to a character in some pretentious neo-classical ballet instead of to one of the chief roles in one of the greatest poetic tragedies of modern times. Here was nothing of Lorca.

Admittedly he did not get much help from Rodrigues' choreography, which is remarkably erratic. It is at its best in the various pas de deux of the bride and Leonardo: here Rodrigues shows that he really understands the feelings of the two characters, and follows the clear indications of the music in building up to climaxes. The same is true of the group dances outside the bride's house: the music here has a sinister undercurrent, and the movements sweep along to give an impression of gathering doom, in spite of their surface gaiety. (Indeed the combination of music and choreography at Covent Garden succeeded where the B.B.C.'s recent television production of the play failed lamentably.) But Rodrigues fails to cope with the supernatural aspect of Lorca's play, represented in the characters of Death and the Moon: these two, belonging to a plane quite different from the others, demand choreography full of poetry and fantasy which is outside Rodrigues's scope.

In general the Covent Garden production was firm and solid; but the scene in the forest suffered from poor lighting: instead of looking mysterious, the tree-dancers (seen in too clear and flat an illumination) merely looked quaint.

## PARK AND SIBLEY

Any time Merle Park or Antoinette Sibley take over an important new role this is an event of some weight; but on 25th August there was what American baseball fans call a " double-header ": Sibley took over the leading role in *Ballet Imperial* (her first major role at the Garden, apart from her appearance as Swanilda in the school show) and Park took over the title role in *Mam'zelle Angot*.

Sibley could scarcely have been more unlucky in the role allotted to her for what is in effect a type of promotion. Balanchine's choreography for this role is very awkward for the dancer, because of the way the movements are strung together; often she has to make " preparation " movements without being given the chance to perform the step to which they are a preparation, and the phrasing is generally abrupt, showing little interest in the melodic line. As a result this role has never attracted Fonteyn, and in fact it has defeated a number of talented dancers. But Sibley phrased her movements with such ease, charm and assurance that the difficulties disappeared as if by magic; she even managed to introduce a certain element of Swan-Lake lyricism into Balanchine's dry neo-classicism by the way she carried her arms and head.

Merle Park made Mam'zelle Angot deliciously French, establishing very vividly the high spirits and hot temper of the character and bringing to life Massine's rather mechanical choreography in a very individual way. Though I am happy to see her allotted this soubrette role (which she interprets magnificently) I hope it does not mean that either she or the Royal Ballet management has decided that she is essentially a demi-caractère dancer. She is quite remarkably versatile, and should be given a chance at many different types of role—grave and gay, dramatic and lyrical; what is even more important, I hope that choreographers will create for her new roles which break right away from any existing theories of type-casting. The fact that her face in repose is not conventionally beautiful is of no importance; for it is remarkably mobile and expressive, and she can look ravishing if the role calls for this.

## LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

The new production of *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* at Covent Garden on 2nd September (a year after its first production by Andrée Howard for the Edinburgh Festival Ballet) showed up rather cruelly the defects of this ballet, in spite of—or rather because of—the care which clearly had been put into all its details. The most depressing aspect of the new production was Alexander Goehr's music, based on madrigals dating from 1600. His selection and arrangement of the music showed a very marked lack of feeling for the laws of choreography; for the whole score proceeded at the same slow tempo, with the same slack rhythms and in the same mood of gentle melancholy. When there were crucial developments in the action—such as when the Knight beheld the other knights for the first time—the music continued in exactly the same mood, so that the change went for nothing. What is more, the composer—whose normal manner is distinctly modern—orchestrated the old melodies in a rather sentimental nineteenth-

century romantic manner which deprived the ballet of the mediaeval flavour demanded by the theme (and clearly present in Keats' archaistic poem). In fact Alexander Goehr showed poor judgment in making a florid orchestration for Covent Garden: the spare orchestration with a small number of solo instruments which he employed at Edinburgh was much more effective.

The choreography was much the same as before, in Andrée Howard's familiar all-purpose neo-classical style. Though she had made some cuts, the ballet seemed to contain a great deal of padding: the evolutions of the knights in the background, for example, conveyed nothing to me. But the misty setting designed by the choreographer (much more elaborate than the Edinburgh one) looked well enough in its timid, tactful way. The most interesting aspect of the revival was the dancing of Georgina Parkinson: she looked exquisitely beautiful, and danced with such grace one longed for her to have some expressive movements to interpret. Much the same could be said of Donald Macleary, who struggled gamely to find some positive qualities in the Knight.

### HEATON'S FAREWELL

True to her nature, Anne Heaton made her farewell performance as the Betrayed Girl in *The Rake's Progress* (2nd September) a memorable occasion. From the moment she entered the stage in Scene I she broke away from the familiar silly creature pushed around by the mother to portray the grief-stricken figure of an abandoned and desperate girl. One would have expected this to run counter to the choreography—particularly when the Betrayed Girl is pushed from behind in a series of jolts—but Anne Heaton's control of her body and facial expression was so perfect, and her stage presence so commanding, that she remained convincing throughout the scene. Then the Betrayed Girl continued to gain in dignity right up to the final moment, when she gave a heartrending poignancy to the moment just before the Rake's Death: then she pulled back on his arm, as if to keep him alive by the sheer force of her self-sacrificing and unrequited love. She was too much of an artist to make any moves likely to distract attention from the Rake at this moment; but her pose expressed so much emotion that she dominated the stage, and it was impossible to look at anyone but her. As she let fall the hand of the Rake it was as if she were saying farewell to ballet; and one could feel the emotion of the audience surging up to meet her superb gesture. Long after the lights had gone up the audience continued to call her back, until finally she came through the parting in the big curtain to make her last *reverence* at the very edge of the orchestra pit.

**FERNAU HALL**

### Spanish dance recital at Hastings

Tani Morena and the Spanish Dance Group gave a series of performances from 30th July to 1st August at The Stables, that delightful little theatre club at Hastings which is doing so much to encourage the arts, and whose programme during the summer months included violin and Chamber Music recitals, well-known string quartets, drama, poetry readings and ballet.

Although Miss Morena's timing is not always flawless her rendering of the "Intermedio from the Goyescas of Granados" was deeply moving. She is one of those dancers with a positive stage personality. She acts naturally and effortlessly, and her performance of the *Jaleo de Jerez* was warmly received by the audience. This same vitality was noticeable in her flamenco, though it lacked the relentless quality, and perhaps rapidity, which we expect of the gitanos.

The singer, Lionel Basilisco and the stronger accompanist of the two guitarists, Enrique Bejerano gave their scenes a warmth to which the dancer could respond, at times hilariously. Although his voice is not loud, Basilisco is a strong singer and his *La Caña* and *Seguiriyas* in expression and gesture as much as in tone awed his Hastings audience.

The programme was not entirely satisfactory because the solos tend to break up continuity. Nevertheless the pianist, Alison Gordon, obviously a concert pianist, was appreciated by the musically-minded audience of this theatre club. They were also enthusiastic about the performance of *Granadinas* by Ricardo.

The programme was played before a full house.

The Federation of Russian Classical Ballet presented *The Harlequin Ballet* for three days from September 14th.

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**FESTIVAL BALLET** *continued from page 7*

John Gilpin electrified the audience in several items with pirouettes which gradually slowed down—a feat of virtuosity which has almost disappeared from the stage, though several danseurs used to perform it before and during the War. Carla Fracci made a very striking impression as "Cerrito" in the *Pas de Quatre*, dazzling the audience with the warmth and springtime freshness of her personality.

At the end of the performance John Gilpin presented Anton Dolin with a laurel wreath. Dolin then made a speech in which he thanked Dr. Braunsweg and all the guest and resident stars of the company for their help in building up the company. This emphasis on the managerial and performance side of the company was in harmony with his artistic policy, but I was surprised that he did not make some reference to the creative side (choreography, music, design, etc.). **FERNAU HALL**

## t.v. — In Britain — by HELEN ROSS

*Monday, 3rd August—Associated Rediffusion—London Morning*

The most remarkable feature about Noel Coward's first ballet *London Morning* (performed by the Festival Ballet at the Royal Festival Hall) is that it is presented by an agreement with Associated Rediffusion. This is the first time that a television company has made such a notable contribution to the promotion of the art of ballet, and it is to be hoped that this will be the first of many other such ventures. The ballet had its première at the Royal Festival Hall on July 14th, and was televised in full nearly three weeks later. Michael Currer-Briggs was responsible for a first-rate production. The very highest praise must go to him for a sensitive production in the best taste and of the highest quality. This production must have been a difficult task, with so many characters and so much activity going on at the same time. By imaginative cutting, and beautifully arranged camera angles, the atmosphere of the ballet was preserved and even enhanced on television; in fact the cutting built up climaxes which were non-existent in the original. Very clever, too, was the highlighting of particular groups without loss to the continuity of the ballet. Certain episodes were cut down or not shown in full on television, but as these were all better left out, this gave the television version an advantage over the stage production. The sets and lighting were both of an excellent standard, and certainly the sets looked far more attractive than those on the stage. The atmosphere of the opening night was recaptured by showing the audience entering the theatre to take their seats, and then, when the ballet was over, we had the closing scene of the ovations given to Noel Coward and the cast.

As a write-up of the ballet itself has already appeared in this magazine, a detailed description is unnecessary. Personally, I found the choreography and subject matter of the ballet most disappointing: it had neither wit nor subtlety. It is doubtful whether this can be classed as a ballet; I felt that if it were cut down considerably and had singers added, it would make a revue number. The dancing honours must go to John Gilpin, who was in excellent form. Jeannette Minty, as the American girl with a camera, appeared to advantage on television, as did Vassilie Trunoff as the Guards Officer. The rest of the company were given little opportunity to show off their talents.

* *The September issue of Ballet Today contained four pages of pictures of* London Morning *and a review of the Ballet by Fernau Hall.*

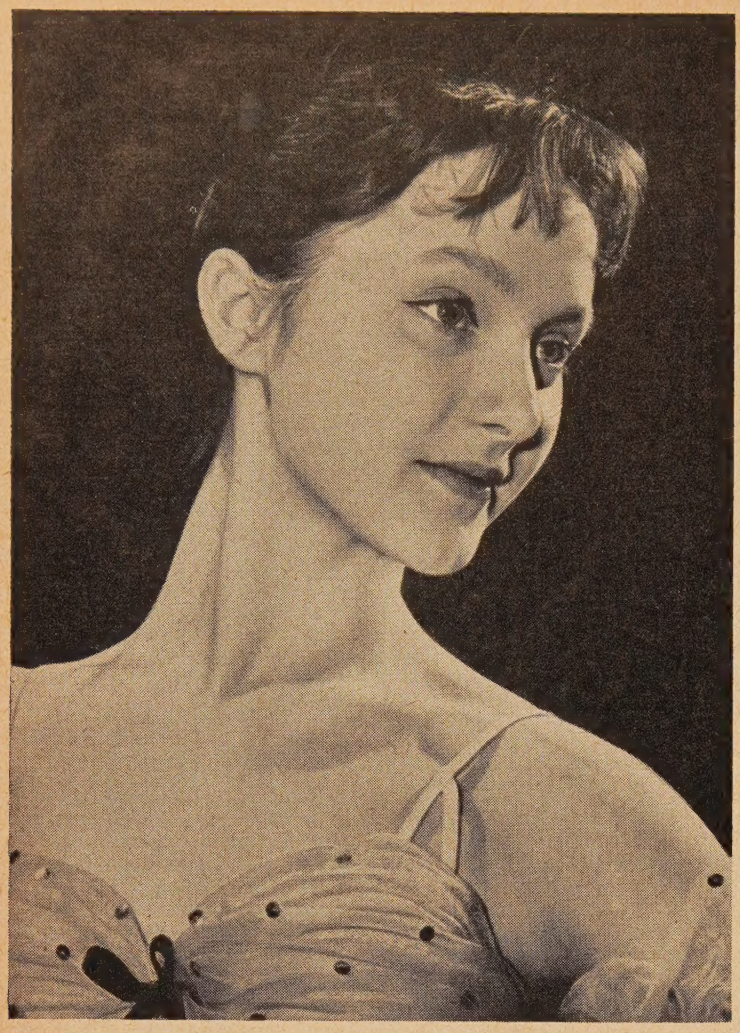
*Sunday, 16th August—B.B.C. Television—Two Brothers.*

When Norman Morrice's ballet entitled *Two Brothers* was presented by the Rambert Ballet at Sadler's Wells Theatre last year, it was one of the most moving and intelligent new ballets to be produced for some time. Unfortunately, the production of this ballet on television did not come up to the standard of the stage version, owing to complete lack of imagination in the cutting and camera work. The cutting had nothing to do with the musical phrasing or the continuity of the story. The corps de ballet, which should have played a prominent part by registering reactions to the drama being played out by the three principal dancers, were so poorly shown that they had hardly any effect at all on the story. Camera angles were changed for no apparent reason; usually they were unflattering to the dancer at the time and did nothing to heighten the drama or atmosphere. On several occasions too, the cameras failed to follow the dancers, so that half the movements were off screen. The principal artists, Norman Morrice, Gillian Martlew and John Chesworth, appearing in their original roles, all gave good performances. The production was by Christian Simpson.

## — In France — by JEAN COQUELLE

During the last week of August a Conference-Festival of Television Opera and Ballet was held in Salzburg under the auspices of UNESCO. This is intended to make possible contacts between television technicians, singers, conductors and choreographers interested in television.

A number of countries took part. Switzerland presented an "electronic opera" by Henk Badings, and Belgium an opera-ballet of the 18th century *Le Debat d'Amour et de Folie*, by David van de Woestyne. France presented a telerecording of the recital by Callas at the Paris Opera, and a work of the 17th century by Claudio Monteverdi, *Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*. Dancing is very important in this latter work, which has been choreographed by Juan Corelli. Clorinda is danced by Madeleine Lafon, one of the stars of the Paris Opera, Tancredi by Vladimir Skouratoff, the recent partner of Markova in the Festival Ballet summer season in London.



*The Bolshoi Ballet has returned from its tour of America, crowned with new laurels. From Moscow* **BORIS LVOV-ANOKHIN** *writes of the careers of the young dancers who will be the stars of tomorrow.*

# DANCERS of GREAT TALENT

Yelena Ryabinkina who made her debut in Moscow recently.

THE Bolshoi Theatre company has returned from America crowned with new laurels, but it was not only the world-famous stars such as Galina Ulanova, Maya Plisetskaya, Raisa Struchkova, Nikolai Fadeyechev, Vladimir Levashov, Boris Khokhlov and Yuri Zhdanov that the Americans acclaimed, there was praise for the youthful Yekaterina Maximova and Vladimir Vasiliev, who have just made their debuts on the stage, as well.

Yekaterina Maximova's mother was rather worried when she let her daughter travel across the ocean to the American continent for Yekaterina is still very young, so girlish and naïve. It is only her amazing persistence in training, her complete concentration on, and devotion to her work that reveals her strong character and will, the qualities so necessary to the ballerina.

On the stage too Maximova is charmingly young and artless. Her dance is that of a happy and boisterous child, with just a touch of naïve coquetry of the woman to come. Her light leaps are like those of a mischievous but very graceful elf.

She studied under that excellent teacher, Yelizaveta Gerdt, who has trained her in the academic manner of the dance, and taught her to retain her classic purity and austerity of line even during the swiftest of tempos and most complex combinations of movements.

Maximova is very pretty, and has shapely legs and smooth, rounded arms. She is a ballerina of the classical forms and the classical school. Her arabesques are very correct and beautiful, and her petit terre-a-terre movements have a gossamer quality, as though drawn in pastel. Maximova has a fine ear for music and rhythm: she responds to the melodies with every movement of her body.

The young ballerina has already danced the difficult pas de deux from Act 1 of Adam's *Giselle*, the roles of Masha the Princess in Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker*, and the winsome, loving and faithful Katerina of Prokofiev's *Stone Flower*. In the latter role she has distinctly demonstrated an inherent beauty of classical line coupled with true artistry of rendition. Here is a flawless technique that enables her to give free vent to her feelings in the dance. She is a dancer of great promise.

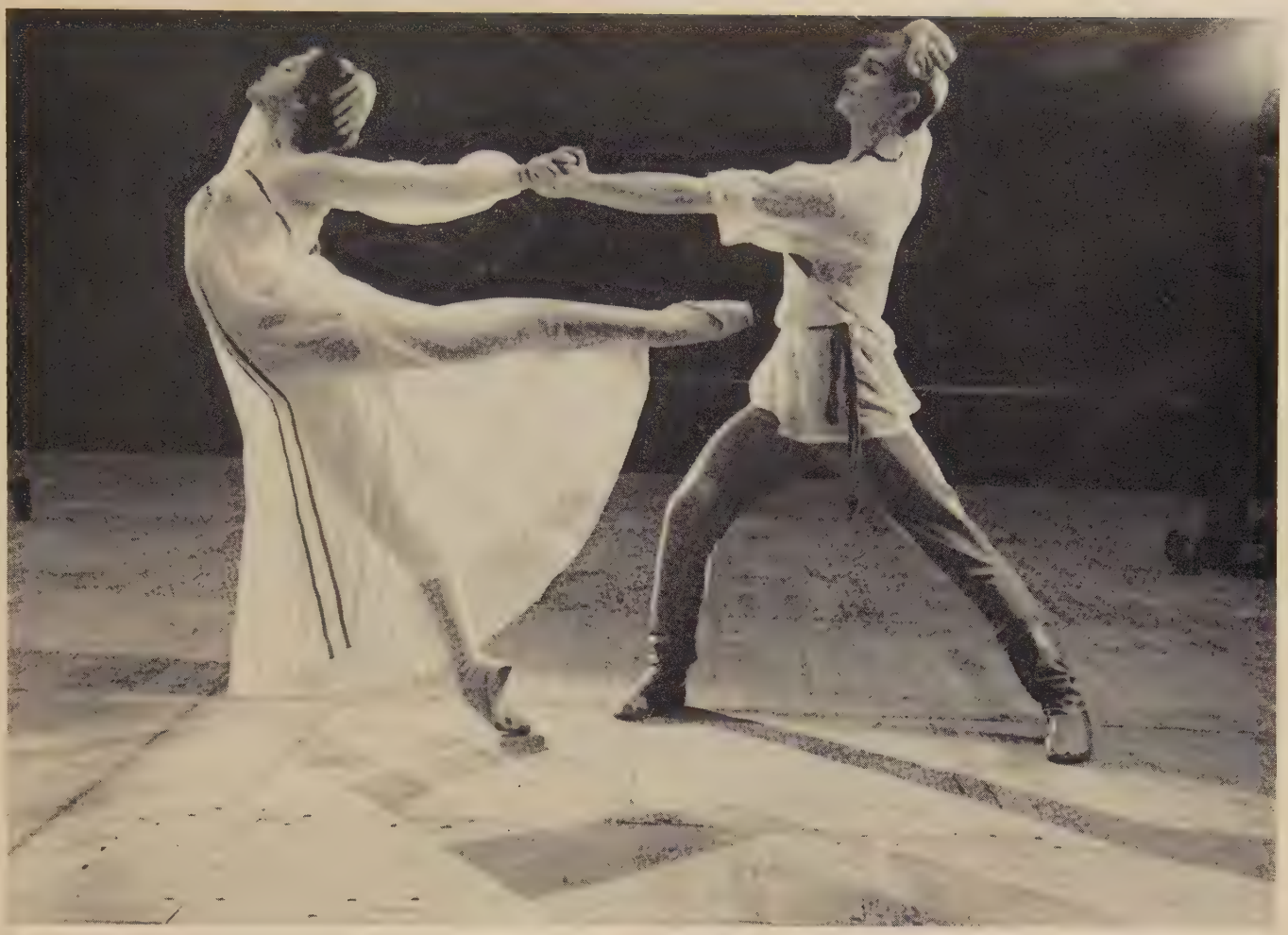
Vladimir Vasiliev, Maximova's partner in *The Stone Flower*, does not look the least like a dancer off stage. He is more like a young worker or student than anything else. He has light brown hair and a round open face with blue twinkling eyes, and is the son of a lorry driver. As a matter of fact, quite a few famous dancers of the Bolshoi (Rudenko and Fadeyechev, for instance) are lorry drivers' children. There are some who are inclined to joke about this, saying that these dancers have inherited their fathers' manner of gliding and describing breakneck turns at topmost speed.

Legends were told about the great Russian dancer Waclaw Nijinsky and his terrible shyness and taciturnity that were especially manifest during his studies at ballet school.

Vasiliev, on the contrary, is never to be found by himself. He loves to be with people, and is good-natured, candid, and highly sociable. These are new times, and we have a new way of bringing up children. Hence the new type of actor, in close touch with life and people, with their joys and sorrows.

Vladimir Vasiliev works a great deal. At school he was plagued with one defect—he was not " pliant " enough. He has conquered that defect now. Perhaps his figure is not so perfect, but he has a flexible torso and strong expressive hands. His talent for miming was revealed before he showed any special aptitude for dancing. At one of the graduation performances, the 17-year-old lad played the role of the gloomy, jealous avenger Giotto in the ballet, *Francesca da Rimini*. It was hard to believe that the part was being enacted by a mere youth, there was so much expression, dramatism and temperament in each of his poses. His black and purple costume, his burning eyes and the pale face framed by the auburn curls of his wig immediately drew the attention of the audience. Everybody was amazed at the depth of his impersonation. He was not merely a jealous murderer; he seemed to emanate a tragic force, an aura of doom. One felt sure that he would make an excellent mime. But soon everybody discerned his dancing qualities in his remarkable turns and vigorous leaps.

During his very first season the young dancer performed many diverse roles from the lovely *Chopiniana* (he danced in this ballet with



Yekaterina Maximova in the role of Katerina and Vladimir Vasiliev as Danila in the Bolshoi Theatre ballet *The Stone Flower*.
*Photo:* by B. Fishman

the great Ulanova), and the classical *Nutcracker* to the technically versatile dances of the Fawn in *Walpurgis Night*, where he manifested his penchant for the grotesque and fine plastic expressiveness.

In Prokofiev's *Stone Flower* he dances the part of Danila, the charming village lad with the heart and hands of the born artist. So ardently does he perform this role, so easily and boldly does he overcome the enormous technical difficulties of the high, impetuous leaps with which it abounds, that he conveys a wonderfully fresh image of inspired youth.

For his American tour Vasiliev prepared parts of his role of Ali-Batyr in the fairy ballet *Shuraleh*. He is remarkably fitted for the character of the good-natured giant folk hero.

Vasiliev was a favoured pupil of Mikhail Gabovich, renowned for his superb renditions of the roles of Romeo, Albert the Prince in *Swan Lake*, and many others. Gabovich was both a splendid dancer and a clever mime. Now he is an excellent teacher. He is very proud of Vasiliev, and tries to pass on to him all his own versatility and knowledge of the classical repertoire. On the stage too he continues to coach his pupil. Under his watchful, practised eye, Vasiliev's talent is gradually unfolding to the full.

While Maximova and Vasiliev were touring America with spectacular success, a new star of dazzling brilliancy appeared on the stage of the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. This was Yelena Ryabinkina, a senior class pupil of the Bolshoi's Ballet School, who danced the most difficult classical role of Odette-Odile in *Swan Lake*. This, at the age of seventeen, before graduating from the ballet school !

What was most remarkable was the fact that there was nothing of the pupil in her rendition. She is tall and majestic of stature, with natural poise and " singing " plastic arms. The proud turns of her lovely head are always very expressive, and her pirouettes are brilliant and impetuous, yet smooth and perfect in pattern. Of course there were flaws in her dancing, but they were simply the result of the nervous excitement due to such a responsible performance.

Ryabinkina studied under Vera Vasilyeva, one of the gifted dancers of the Moscow school. The young ballerina's talent manifested itself at an early age. In the third class she was already performing the difficult part of Cupid in *Don Quixote*, which is rather protracted, and has variations which require excellent technique *sur les pointes*.

She has danced many parts to Tchaikovsky's music, beginning with that of Masha the girl, during which she adapted herself to the stage and the audience, the pas de trois, then a solo part in the Snowflakes Waltz, and finally the difficult classical part of Masha the princess.

At school Ryabinkina also danced many numbers, including fragments from Glazunov's *Raymonda*. K. Goleizovsky, the well-known choreographer, staged two concert numbers for her.

She worked on the role of Odette-Odile for 40 days. This was a very brief period for preparing the part, and if she managed to cope with it, it was only due to her discipline and professional hardiness. She was greatly aided by Yelizaveta Gerdt who coached her for the part.

Ryabinkina's mother, Alla Tsabel, was a character dancer at the Bolshoi Theatre. When she left the stage, she worked as manageress of the Bolshoi's ballet company for a long time. She is her daughter's friend mentor and adviser. Ryabinkina's younger sister, 12-year-old Natasha, is also studying at the ballet school.

Ryabinkina was able to dance the role of Odette-Odile not only because she possesses a beautifully trained body, but also because she is clever and very sensitive. In school she studied well, and excelled in the exact sciences such as physics and mathematics, which is a rare quality in the future ballerina. She also took piano lessons, and did not stop them even for the duration of her debut on the stage.

Ryabinkina is very serious and thoughtful, and behaves with becoming modesty and dignity. The ovations and numerous articles of praise have not turned her head. She goes on training quietly and industriously, and this gives us grounds to believe in her future.

Each passing year brings new artists to the Russian ballet stage from the midst of the graduates of the choreographic schools, among whom there are always brilliant talents that prove over and over again the splendid merits of the Russian school of dancing.

JEROME ROBBINS and his company. Standing, back row, (11 dancers): Tom Abbott, Robert Bakanic, Jerome Robbins, Bill Reilly, John Jones, Jay Norman, Michael Maule, Barbara Milberg, James Moore, Erin Martin, Jamie Bauer. Kneeling, middle row, (four dancers): Doug Spingler, James White, Gwen Lewis, Wilma Curley. Front row, seated, (six dancers): Christine Mayer, Larry Gradus, Muriel Bentley, Beryl Towbin, Patricia Dunn, Jane Mason.

*"Ballets: U.S.A." touring Europe and the Middle East this summer appeared at the Edinburgh Festival on Sept. 7th and then came to London for a one-week season.*

# THE BACKGROUND OF "BALLETS: U.S.A."

## by JEROME ROBBINS

"Ballets: U.S.A." is the name of the dance company originally formed in the spring of 1958 to appear only in Spoleto, Italy, at Gian Carlo Menotti's Festival of Two Worlds, and later at the Brussels World's Fair. It made its debut at Spoleto with the support of the Catherwood Foundation of Philadelphia and was presented in association with the International Cultural Programme of the United States, administered by the American National Theatre and Academy. The success of this debut, enthusiastic beyond our wildest anticipation led to demands for the company from almost every part of Europe. To our regret, we could accept only two of these before returning to America: Trieste and Florence, where we appeared during the Maggio Festival.

The idea of the Festival of Two Worlds was to bring together artists from both Europe and America and let them rub cultural shoulders. The performers were all to be young and for the most part not yet of star calibre.

The name of the company itself, "Ballets: U.S.A.", was chosen, not in any way to represent all of the dance in the U.S.A., but to identify to Europeans clearly the source and home ground from which the dancers and the choreography emerged. Nor was it meant to suggest "Americana" in terms of folklore or that it employs only native talent. I feel and believe very strongly that ballet dancing in America, originally an imported product (much as were the forefathers of the people who now dance it), has been completely influenced and drastically changed by this nation and the culture in which it has grown up. We in America dress, eat, think, talk and walk differently from any other people. We also dance differently, and this brilliant art of our dancers—unmistakably from the U.S.A.—has gained us many friends and great respect abroad.

The company of "Ballets: U.S.A." was formed by open auditions available to any dancer who felt he or she was competent enough to make the grade. Out of the many hundreds who auditioned, sixteen dancers (eight young men and eight young women) were selected. Our standards were exacting. We were not forming a corps de ballet. Every one of the sixteen dancers had to be of soloist ability, equally secure in classic ballet training and in contemporary jazz technique. Following an intensive six week rehearsal period, we took off for Europe.

The programme of "Ballets: U.S.A." was planned to show Europeans the variety of techniques, styles and theatrical approaches that are America's particular development in dance. Its repertoire was chosen to extend from the classic ballet danced in tights, tutus, toe shoes, to our very own current jazz style, most often performed in plimsolls and knee guards. Consequently, last year's company of only sixteen dancers was called upon to cover this range of techniques and theatrical styles in a repertoire that would tax the resources of many of the world's major ballet companies.

We were most fortunate to secure theatre designs by two superb American artists, Ben Shahn and Saul Steinberg. Mr. Shahn was with us all through rehearsals, built and painted dozens of set models for our ballet *N.Y. Export, op. Jazz* and finally blessed us with a series of beautiful, vivid and terrifying aspects of our city life. Mr. Steinberg cast his sharp eye and fine line on the wonderful opera house in Spoleto and brilliantly set the mood for *The Concert*. Irene Sharaff who has contributed so much to ballet, again gave her superb talents to dressing *The Concert* and *Afternoon of a Faun*. Jean Rosenthal recreated her luminous setting and the radiance of her lighting for *Afternoon of a Faun*.

### PROVOCATIVE NEW JAZZ SCORE

In the field of music, besides Chopin (*The Concert*) and Debussy (*Afternoon of a Faun*), I call particular attention to Robert Prince, a young American composer whom I pulled into the madness of ballet and music festivals and who has given us a provocative new jazz score for *N.Y. Export, op. Jazz*. This variety of music was placed in the energetic and capable hands of a young, new conductor, Werner Torkanowsky.

The world of dance is unpredictable at best. And so, in 1959, contrary to our original intentions, we find that "Ballets: U.S.A." is happily on its way to achieving permanence as a company. That this is so is due in great measure to the distinguished American producer, Leland Hayward, who elected to "import" our "export," and who presented "Ballets: U.S.A." to New York and other American audiences with gratifying success.

It is Mr. Hayward again who is presenting us on our long European tour this summer and autumn. We again initiated our trip abroad at the Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto. In addition to presenting *N.Y. Export. op. Jazz*, *Afternoon of a Faun* and *The Concert*, "Ballets: U.S.A.", which this year will number 20 dancers, introduced a new ballet without music I have choreographed and entitled *Moves*.

"Ballets: U.S.A." which Mr. Hayward is presenting in association with the International Cultural Programme of the United States, administered by the American National Theatre and Academy, is a distillation of all our efforts.

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**FERNAU HALL** *will review the Company's London season in our next issue.*

THE CAREER OF

# JEROME ROBBINS

BORN in New York City, October 11, 1918, to Harry and Lena Robbins. Family later moved to Weehawken, New Jersey, where he graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School in 1935. Very interested in the theatre, particularly in puppetry. Majored in chemistry for one year at New York University, lack of funds prevented continuing. Became interested in dance through his sister Sonya.

Studied with Antony Tudor, Eugene Loring, Ella Daganova, Helena Platova; New Dance Group (modern), Helene Veola (Spanish), Nimura (Oriental), Alyce Bentley, Sonya Robbins (interpretive). Also studied piano, violin, acting, voice.

First theatrical experience as member of Gluck Sandor-Felicia Sorel Dance Centre, New York City, in 1938, in studio performances. Also worked briefly with Yiddish Art Theatre. Danced (1937–41) at Camp Tamiment, New York, where he was hired by Max Liebman to do his first choreography for small shows and revues. Danced (1938–40) in the Broadway choruses of "Great Lady", "Stars in Your Eyes", "Straw Hat Revue" and "Keep Off the Grass".

American Ballet Theatre: as dancer (1940–44; London season 1946) corps de ballet, became soloist 1941. Created the Youth (*Three Virgins and a Devil*), Benvolio (*Romeo and Juliet*), Hermes (*Helen of Troy*), Spanish Lover (*Bluebeard*), title role (*Petrouchka*) and many other major roles including those in his own ballets.

Choreographed for American Ballet Theatre: *Fancy Free* (1944), *Interplay* (1945), *Facsimile* (1947), *Summer Day* (1947).

Choreographed for Original Ballet Russe: *Pas de Trois* (1947).

New York City Ballet: joined company as Associate Artistic Director in November 1949. Maintains that position today. Choreographed (and has danced leading roles in many of the following): *Jones Beach* (with George Balanchine) (1949); *The Guests* (1949); *Age of Anxiety* (1950); *The Cage* (1951); *Pied Piper* (1951); *Ballade* (1952); *Fanfare* (1953); *Afternoon of a Faun* (1953); *Quartet* (1954); *The Concert* (1956). Also performed with New York City Ballet: the Son (*Prodigal Son*); Till (*Till Eulenspiegel*); leading role (*Bourrée Fantasque*).

1951–53, made several trips to Israel, recommending Inbal to the American Fund for Israel Institutions. 1956: staged *Fanfare* for the Royal Danish Ballet.

On Broadway: has become the leading theatre choreographer and director. Choreographed musicals: " On the Town " (1945); " Billion Dollar Baby " (1946); " High Button Shoes " (1947); " Look, Ma, I'm Dancin' ! " (1948), scenario and choreography by Robbins, co-directed with George Abbott; " Miss Liberty " (1949); " Call me Madam " (1950); " The King and I " (1951); " Two's Company " (1952). Co-directed " The Pajama Game " (1954) with George Abbott; adapted, directed and choreographed " Peter Pan " (1954); directed and choreographed " Bells Are Ringing " (1956); conceived, directed and choreographed " West Side Story " (1957); directed and choreographed " Gypsy " (1959).

Jerome Robbins

Opera: " The Tender Land ", staged and choreographed for New York City Opera (1954). This opera was composed by Aaron Copland.

Television: Ford 50th Anniversary Show (1953); " Peter Pan " (1955 and 1956).

Films: " The King and I " (1956).

*The new ballet* Moves (*reviewed by Trudy Goth from Spoleto in our September issue*). *Fernau Hall will review the London season in our next issue.*

# BACK

HER Serene Highness Princess Antoinette of Monaco presented the Anton Dolin awards for 1959 at the Ballet Exhibition, held in the Army & Navy Stores, London, on Tuesday, August 18th. The winners of the awards were then made known by Mr. Anton Dolin, who said that he was not unmindful of the talents of the younger generation of choreographers such as Jack Carter and John Cranko, but in making this award to a choreographer for the first year he wanted to do so to one who had done so much for English ballet. No one, he said, had brought greater prestige to the art of choreography in this country, America and Denmark than one Englishman. Mr. Dolin had danced in one of his very first ballets when a young man and they had remained great friends throughout the years. Now with the deepest admiration he was honoured to present this first award to Mr. Frederick Ashton, of the Royal Ballet.

George Hall

**SVETLANA BERIOSOVA** opened an Exhibition at the famous Foyle Gallery of the work of A. A. Nikolsky, a Russian artist who arrived in this country as a displaced person twelve years ago and for a time worked as a farm labourer on Hayling Island. He specialises in flower paintings, and in our picture they are seen looking at the painting entitled "Hydrangeas and Lilies" priced at 150 guineas.

★

**GEORGE HALL,** director of the Ballet Exhibition, would be quite happy to remain one of the "backroom boys" in ballet but one cannot move in ballet circles for long without seeing evidence of his tremendous initiative and organising ability. It is not generally known however that he himself was a dancer from 1919 to 1926, under the name of Laurence Raye, in the United States and Canada, and played in "The Miracle" and "The Tenth Man" in New York and American productions. In 1928 he helped to found the first Canadian Ballet Company, and became director of "The Theatre Under the Stars" in Vancouver in 1939. For some years now he has been closely connected with the activities of Festival Ballet, and in 1956 edited "The Festival Ballet Year Book" and other publications. The following year he commenced a series of lectures in the Secondary Schools, under the Department of Education giving nearly three hundred lectures in 18 months. He staged the Benois Exhibition at Harrods in 1957, The Ballet Exhibition at the Army and Navy Stores and "The Children in Ballet and the Theatre" Series in 1958, following this with the Exhibition this year. For two years Mr. Hall has directed The Hintlesham Festival, whose activities were reported in our September issue. At the moment he is engaged in editing a new book "Ten Years of Festival Ballet," to be published this autumn, and is presenting noted artists on the "Words and Music" television programme of the B.B.C. He has also made several T.V. broadcasts both in this country, France and Germany.

Markova and Skouratoff in the Tyrolean costume.
*Photo:* Diana Daniels

★

**ALICIA MARKOVA,** with Festival Ballet during their London season, and partnered by Vladimir Skouratoff, as always had a wonderful reception, often stopping the show, many bouquets and innumerable curtain calls.

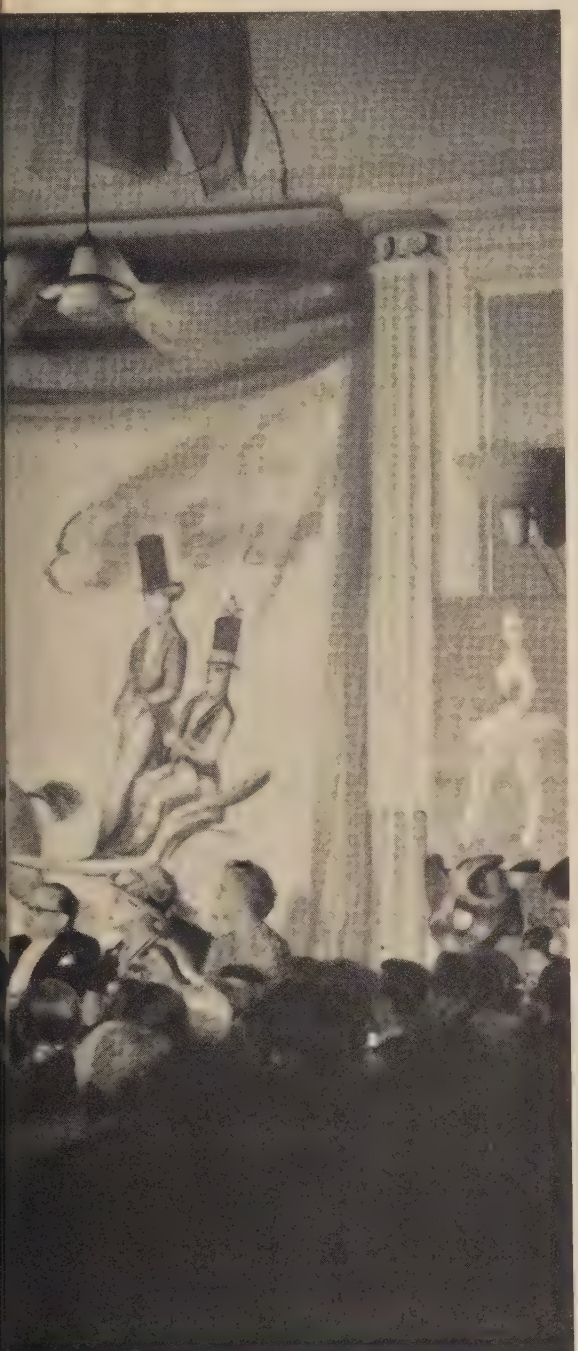
**SKOURATOFF** also came in for his share of the thunderous applause, for he has made many admirers in this country since he first danced here with Lifar's Monte Carlo Ballet in 1946.

Many famous people attended for the presentation of the Anto
Markova, George Hall, Dame Ninette de Valois, Nadia Nerin
Tamara Karsavina and Phyllis Bedells. Mr. Tom Lingwood des
the replicas were made was sculpted by Mr. Antony Gibbons C

# TAGE

His choice of the male dancer who has made the greatest contribution in the field of ballet during the past year was a dancer who for ten years has worked hard, given his services to ballet, never created difficulties. Recognition of his talent has been even more on the Continent than in this country until last year, when every critic referred to him in the role of *Witch Boy* as "a great dancer"—John Gilpin, of Festival Ballet.

In making his third award—to the female dancer of the year, Mr. Dolin said this dancer with hard work, willpower and strength, had created for herself a very great place in the English dance. In making the award to Miss Nadia Nerina of the Royal Ballet Mr. Dolin said he must couple with hers the name of another person, the First Lady in English Ballet, Dame Ninette de Valois, who had put such tremendous enthusiasm into the creation of this ballerina.



wards. Seen here on the platform are (left to right) Alicia Dolin, H.S.H. Princess Antoinette, Dr. Julian Braunsweg, ecor for the Exhibition, and the original statue from which

Maryon Lane and David Blair on their Wedding Da

**MARYON LANE** who married Royal Ballet dancer David Blair in 1957 is expecting a baby in January next year. This will be their first child. Miss Lane's name had appeared in the programme in seven ballets for the Royal Ballet season which commenced 17th August, and hurried rearrangements of cast had to be made.

Dancing in her place were Audrey Farriss in *Pineapple Poll* (18th August) Shirley Grahame in the pas de trois of *Swan Lake* (20th) Merle Park in *Mam'zelle Angot* (21st) Antoinette Sibley in *Ballet Imperial* (25th) Doreen Wells in the Fonteyn performances of *Ondine* (4th, 5th and 10th September) and Shirley Grahame in the Fonteyn performance of *Swan Lake* on the last day of the season (12th).

Congratulations to them both, but we shall miss Maryon, who is one of the most popular, versatile and talented soloists in the Royal Ballet.

★

**ANNE HEATON** made her farewell appearance at the Royal Opera House on the 2nd September, bringing to a close a brilliant career tragically ended by arthritis. Her performance on this and many other recent occasions made it hard to believe that this young artist has been handicapped by the complaint for some time.

Miss Heaton who has spent her entire career between the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet and the Sadler's Wells Ballet (now the Royal Ballet), has created many new roles as well as dancing leading roles of all the classics since a very early age. Her mature performances in dramatic roles such as *The Burrows* left a lasting impression for Miss Heaton is as good an actress as she is a ballerina.

In private life Miss Heaton is Mrs. John Field.

★

**OLIVIA WYATT** beautiful young dancer of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet was killed in an automobile accident on the 8th August, whilst returning from Vancouver to Winnipeg for the opening of the Company's new season commencing the 24th August. Miss Wyatt, the wife of Canadian choreographer Brian Macdonald has a four-year old son, Brian, Jr. Miss Wyatt received her early training in Toronto and at the Ballet Arts School in New York. She also danced with the National Ballet of Canada for two years, and studied under such eminent teachers as Celia Franca and Betty Oliphant. Brian Macdonald choreographed the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's recent 13-week T.V. series "Dancing Storybook."

Anne Heaton

Olivia Wyatt

CAREERS IN PICTURES

# NATALIE KRASSOVSKA

NEXT to being born with a silver spoon in her mouth, perhaps the nicest thing that can happen to a future ballerina is to be born into a dancing family. Natalie Krassovska first saw the light in Moscow between the two wars. Her grandfather had held high rank in the Russian Army, and her father, too, was an officer; descendants of the old Scottish military family named Leslie, they followed the profession which had brought their ancestors to Russia to fight in the Tzars' wars. But on her mother's side she is third of a succession of ballerinas, and it is not surprising, therefore, that at the age of two she was already attempting pirouettes and ballet-steps.

During the '20's, when Russia was going through a bad time with crop-failures and subsequent famine, Natalie's mother, who had been a member of Diaghilev's company, obtained permission to take the little girl to Paris to see her grandmother, formerly a soloist with the Bolshoi, and now running her own ballet school. Immediately on arrival in the French capital, Natalie was enrolled as a pupil in her grandmother's school; and she also had the advantage of receiving an additional lesson once a week from the celebrated Preobrajenska.

In such excellent hands she naturally made rapid progress, and she had the further privilege of working constantly with the greatest choreographers, notably Fokine. "That was perhaps my greatest training of all," she told me. "It meant oh! such hard work, and many, many tears—I did not appreciate at the time how good this was for my career. Now I know what Fokine did for me. He devoted hours and hours beyond the normal working times, until he was satisfied that I could take any part, not only the principal roles, but all the little solos, too. It was in the days before dance-notation had become common, so I carried all the traditions in my head, and now I am a living link with the great Fokine period."

Accustomed to travelling from her earliest youth, little Natalie soon moved in international ballet circles, coming under the influence of the great Nicholas Legat and his circle in London.

Her first engagement was as partner to Serge Lifar, with whom she toured South America. Then followed the memorable season with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, a connection which has been kept up intermittently ever since—she has just rejoined this company as a Guest Star for the New York summer season. And so also has her connection with London's Festival Ballet which has lasted except for short breaks in between, since 1950, when she first joined the Company, until the beginning of their 1959 Summer season in London. Her career has taken her to almost every part of the world, and she has danced in all the European countries except her native Russia and Poland. When I asked her which was her favourite country to dance in, she replied very sensibly that all countries have occasional "off nights" when the dancer does not seem to be quite en rapport with her audience and it becomes harder to move them—but every country nowadays has a following for ballet which is capable of rising to overwhelming enthusiasm. One of the dancer's pleasantest memories is of touching little tokens of appreciation received in all parts of the world.

If Natalie has no particular preference in the matter of countries, the same applies to the many partners she has danced with; in this respect she has been particularly fortunate, for few ballerinas can tick off a series of celebrities like Fokine, Lifar, Massine, Dolin, Briansky, and start making distinctions.

Opposite: in *Swan Lake*. Above: in Romeo and Juliet with Oleg Briansky.
*Photos:* Hamilton Walter

Right: *The Black Swan.*

Launched at such an early age, she also has a formidable list of roles to her credit, some of which she created. Like most ballerinas, she adores *Giselle*. She likes all her roles, but has a particularly soft spot in her heart for *Raymonda*, and she speaks with affection of the *Snow Maiden*, which Nijinska created for her.

Home life and hobbies? "I'm afraid I lead rather a gipsy kind of existence," she says with a slight tinge of regret. "My father had a nice little house in California, which was the place I always went to when I had time for a rest, but since his death I have no home. I am engrossed in my work and move around most of the time, so it is not possible to 'gather moss.' Besides, when I am working, I am always worrying to keep myself up to the top notch, and that leaves no time for hobbies, not even for cooking, which I really enjoy. You might think I could enjoy that hobby during my occasional holidays, but alas ! I dare not. For when I am resting, I have to think of my weight. It never worries me while I am working, but the moment I stop, my weight goes up, unless I cut out all pastries and starchy things, sweets and so on.

"Dancing is my whole life, and I can never imagine anything else I would like to do better—though I might, perhaps, many years hence, have a school of my own—provided it can be a school devoted to classical ballet. In my opinion the classic school will always retain its supreme importance, no matter what changes the future may produce in public taste."

Meanwhile she "keeps her hand in" by taking an odd class at Madame Legat's school at Tunbridge Wells, where a spare bedroom is always kept in readiness for her, if ever she feels like spending a weekend in the country.

**Text by ELISABETHE CORATHIEL**

## LIST OF BALLETS

| | |
|---|---|
| **FOKINE** | Les Sylphides, Spectre de la Rose, Carnaval, Petrouchka, Firebird, L'Epreuve D'Amour, Don Juan, Paganini. |
| **MASSINE** | Three Cornered Hat, Capriccio Espagnol, Beau Danube, Gaîeté Parisienne, St. Francis, Boutique Fantasque, Rouge et Noir, Seventh Symphony. |
| **BALANCHINE** | Ballet Imperial, Serenade, Mazatiana, Bourgeois Gentilhomme, Raymonda. |
| | Snow Maiden (specially created for her by Nijinska). |
| | Madronias (classical Spanish, for which she learned to play the castanets). |
| **LICHINE** | Symphonic Impressions, Paquita, Chopin Concerto. |

Giselle, Coppelia, Casse Noisette, Swan Lake, all the pas de deux, Sleeping beauty (Aurora, last act), Francesca, Schéhérazade, Prince Igor.

Young Australian dancer Marilyn Jones who made her debut as a ballerina in *The Ballet Surf*, is seen here with Robert Pomie, who also choreographed the ballet.

# REPORT FROM Paris

—By FERDINAND REYNA

THE dancer Katherine Dunham spent her holidays in Paris, where she rehearsed the show she will present first in Israel and then in Greece and Turkey. She has had her stage costumes made by the great couturière Maggy Rouff. One of the costumes will be in lamé, with four organdy petticoats.

The star of the Opéra Michel Renault has returned to Paris after spending his holidays on Lac d'Annécy, where he stayed for a month. He was the guest of Madame Réal, the wife of an Annécy electrician whose children, Sophie and Michel, have just started work in films. Michel Renault came to Annécy to rehearse Sophie Réal in the role of the dancer which has been given to her by the director Walter Kaps in his next film *Détournement de mineurs* (Corruption of Minors). In this film Sophie Réal will play alongside Raymond Pellegrin, Barbara Lage and Agnés Laurent.

The ballet company of the Marquis de Cuevas is going to start a regular season at Geneva. Quite recently the Marquis, watching a brilliant performance by his company at the Geneva Casino, confirmed his intention of presenting regular seasons in this city, which was once the home of the League of Nations and has an international character. The negotiations are well ahead, and the signature of this important contract is expected at any moment.

Jean Benoit Levy has died in Paris at the age of 71. This great director was responsible for a large number of films before the war, including the justly famous film *La Mort du Cygne*, one of the most beautiful dance films ever made. The principal parts were taken by a child of genius (Janine Charrat), the star Mia Slavenska, and Yvette Chauviré (then very young). Jean Benoit Levy devoted himself in particular to films of social and educational value; he directed a large number of documentaries and educational films for the cinema and for French and American television, and wrote a number of books such as *Le Cinema d'Enseignement et d'Education* (Educational Films) and *Les Grandes Missions du Cinema* (Cinema's Great Mission).

For some time Jean Benoit Levy had been getting ready to return to films to direct with Josephine Baker a film on the children of the world. He was working on the scenario when death overtook him.

Claude Giraud, the well-known Paris impresario, has announced that the International Ballet of the Marquis de Cuevas will make a tour of Europe, North Africa and Egypt, arriving in Paris at the end of March or the beginning of April, and then go on tour in Argentina, Brazil and Central America. Serge Lifar has been engaged by the Marquis to do the choreography of the ballet *On ne Badine Pas avec l'Amour*. This work, inspired by the play of the same name by Alfred de Musset, will have music by Vittoria; the principal roles will be taken by Nina Vyroubova, Genia Melikova, Daniel Seillier, George Goviloff and Don Spottswood. Giraud will also present in Paris the Hungarian National Ballet, and in Monte Carlo he will present the ballet company of the Budapest Opera with two Bartok works, *The Miraculous Mandarin* and *The Wooden Prince*.

Jean Robin, artistic director of the Théâtre des Champs Elysées, is now working with André Coffrant, director of the Pierre Lacotte company, on the preparations for a Ballet National Populaire (People's National Ballet) of the same type as the Théâtre National Populaire of Jean Vilar. It is to be hoped that a state subsidy will be forthcoming for such a project. In addition Jean Robin will present in his theatre Antonia Molina and her company, Luisillo and his Spanish Ballet, Pilar Lopez, the new flamenco danseuse Zambra, the Indian company of Mrinalini Sarabhai, the Antonio company, and finally the International Ballet of the Marquis de Cuevas.

Roland Petit has begun to stage the choreographic part of the operetta *Patron* by Marcel Aymé; the female star will naturally be his wife Zizi Jeanmaire, and the first night will be on 28th September at the Theatre Sarah Bernhardt. *Patron* is a gangster comedy in which the state itself starts a gang in order to make those defrauding the tax-collectors pay very indirect taxes. The music is by Guy Béart, who has already composed a number of famous songs. In addition Roland Petit is rehearsing Tessa Beaumont and Milenko Banovitch in his ballet *Cyrano de Bergerac*: the former will replace Zizi Jeanmaire in the role of Roxane, and the latter will replace George Reich in the role of Christian. *Cyrano* will be revived at the Alhambra about mid-October.

The foundation dinner of the Ballet Club de Paris was held on 7th July, with a brilliant collection of invited guests, including stars of the ballet and Parisian personalities. This club is an international private society, intended to bring together people who love the dance, so that they can work for its development and for friendship between all those who care about the dance or work on the production of ballets. The club has its headquarters at the offices of its treasurer, Claude Giraud, 252 Faubourg St.-Honoré, Paris 8. Foreigners may belong as well as French people. The meetings and dinners will take place at the restaurant Bar du Rond-Point, at the Rond-Point des Champs-Elysées, in the very heart of Paris. The Marquis de Cuevas and the star of the Opéra Lycette Darsonval have agreed to be honorary presidents; (*our critic Ferdinand Reyna is the president*), the critic André Schaikevitch is vice president; Irène Lidova is general secretary; and Madame Marie-Louise Reyna is associate general secretary. Various personalities of the ballet world are on the board: the composer Henri Sauguet, the painter Bernard Daydé, Jean Robin, Nina Tikanova, Carole Bérard (of the Opéra Library) etc. The Ballet Club hopes to recruit its members as much from foreigners as from French people, creating a bond of friendship between all its members.

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# AUSTRALIAN NEWS

### Sydney

MANY are the happy hours that Australians spend on the famous Manly Beach in Sydney, but tragedy too can strike as the sea claims a victim. At such a moment, watching lifesavers carry out a body, the idea germinated in the mind of Robert Pomie to create his own version of the fun, thrills and drama occurring every day on the beach. The result was *The Ballet Surf* produced at the little Ballet Theatre, Le Francais, in Sydney, with Marilyn Jones, Pomie's partner in the ballet, making her debut as a principal dancer, and winning acclaim from the critics.

Robert Pomie was born in Morocco and trained for more than ten years at the ballet school of the French National Theatre in Paris, and has danced with the Paris Opera Ballet. He did the pas de deux with Renée Jeanmaire in the film "Folies Bergere", and took prominent roles with the Roland Petit Ballet in London, Paris and Berlin seasons in the ballets *Carmen* and *The Wolf*.

Soon after he went to Australia, Pomie married Kathleen Gorham, one of the most popular Australian ballerinas, and together they opened the theatre in Sydney.

(*See photo on opposite page*)

### New Venture in Brisbane

Brisbane has a new live theatre, the first since the 1930's, and this is the work of one man, Charles Lisner, who came to the city to work as ballet-master six years ago. Mr. Lisner, who was a dancer with the Borovansky and Sadler's Wells Companies, found all the money necessary for constructing and equipping the theatre out of his own pocket. The theatre, which was officially opened as "the Academy Theatre" by the Lord Mayor on the 1st July, is tucked away in the heart of the Caledonian Society building in Elizabeth Street, and although the seating capacity is a modest 250, the stage is relatively large—33 ft. by 25 ft. The lighting and high-fidelity sound equipment are first-class, the fully upholstered seats stand on a specially raked auditorium floor. And comfort in front of the house has not been Mr. Lisner's only consideration, for there are fully-equipped dressing rooms for the dancers.

Mr. Lisner's own locally based ballet company is now rehearsing four original works (with choreography and music of one by Mr. Lisner himself) for their next season, but the theatre will also serve another purpose for it will be available for hire by other ballet, drama or opera groups, and in this way, it is hoped, will attract student groups to Brisbane from all over Australia.

Arnold Spohr

## NEWS FROM

# Canada

WHEN Arnold Spohr, director of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, was in London in June this year I asked him if the forthcoming royal tour of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and H.R. Highness the Duke of Edinburgh would include another Command Performance, as it did during their visit in 1951. Mr. Spohr asked me not to write that it would, saying "I hope so, but I like to see things happen first before I talk about them." Well, now it can be told, and the delight of the Company knew no bounds when Her Majesty and Prince Philip arrived at the Winnipeg Arena on July 24th to see a performance of *Grasslands*, a ballet which tells the story of the joys and hardships of farm life on the great plains. The Winnipeg Arena was beautifully decorated for the occasion, and after the performance of this one ballet the lights went up and the audience prepared to see them leave, but the Queen did not make her departure and remained to see the closing number *The Comedians*. Seeing that Her Majesty's day had started in Portage la Prairie at 9 a.m. the entire Company were thrilled at this unexpected and kindly gesture. Her Majesty also wrote a charming letter thanking the Company for the performance which she enjoyed very much. They were also told that a personally autographed photograph of the Royal couple is on its way to them for framing, in memory of the occasion.

David Shields, formerly with the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet and the Royal Ballet, joined the Royal Winnipeg Ballet as a leading dancer and gave his first performance with the Company before Her Majesty and Prince Philip.

Another English dancer to take part in the Royal Performance was Sonia Taverner, also formerly with the Royal Ballet. Miss Taverner received her early training at the Elmhurst School and then later at the Royal Ballet School.

The entire Company has been shocked and saddened by the death of Olivia Wyatt in a motoring accident. This is reported in *Backstage*, this issue.

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## REPORT FROM

# Amsterdam

—By JANET SINCLAIR

LEAVING Holland after six years it is hard to avoid the conclusion that ballet in the Netherlands is in a poor condition. Most of the present difficulties and frustrations seem to come not from lack of money (Government and local subsidies are generous) but from interference from non-artistic bodies and individuals and from personal feuds and fads of those practically concerned with ballet.

### THE AMSTERDAM BALLET

The Amsterdam Ballet, a forced combination of two groups, has finally come into being accompanied by almost as many fanfares and cheering as was the Netherlands Ballet five years ago: but many of Holland's best and most promising dancers have been left out (I am thinking now of the outstanding Ine Rietstap and the two up-and-coming dancers Clazina Nepveu and Ans van Opstal: while it is a sign of remarkable obtuseness on the part of the direction not to make sure of that rarity, a talented boy—Bob Verbruggen).

### POOR SALARIES

It is also most disheartening to think that such extremely poor salaries are still offered and accepted, at this time when a subsidy for the year has been granted of something in the neighbourhood of forty thousand pounds: to take one example, a male dancer in his late twenties with three years' experience is expected to work for twenty-six pounds per month, or, when income tax has been paid, something like six pounds a week. One can only wonder where all the money goes: certainly not to the dancers, and without reasonable living wages no ballet company can ever expect to be anything but a dilettante toy for the amusement of one or two people personally concerned.

The Netherlands Ballet is in a worse state, one-half of its dancers have left; and—as expected—Sonia Gaskell has been invited to return as Director and has accepted the invitation.

### A NEW COMPANY

The chief hope for the future of ballet in Holland at the moment seems to be in the new troupe—unsubsidised—of which Benjamin Harkarvy is artistic director. This company has succeeded in engaging the only two young Dutch choreographers, plus half a dozen of the very best Dutch dancers, it has an extremely go-ahead business manager and if it can only survive the first six months it may become a company of international stature, rather on the lines of Roland Petit's Ballets de Paris or Ballet Rambert of twenty years ago. In any case it is refreshing to hear of a new company (particularly in Holland) coming into being without ambitions to reproduce *Swan Lake* and *Sylphides*, but to concentrate on original works, made for the dancers available.

(ED. NOTE.—Janet Sinclair, our critic in Holland for six years, has now returned to London (see *News from Here and There*). Dancer Ine Rietstap will now take over the Amsterdam coverage.)

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# The Festivals

reported by

TRUDY GOTH

*Opposite: The Eternal Island*

## SPOLETO

WITHIN the Spoleto Festival of the Two Worlds, the ballet plays the most important role. And Americans who in recent years have shown such particular strength in this sort of art, are easily getting the lion's share on this occasion. It is a fact that where the various other performances avail themselves of international participation, the dance remains an exclusive American contribution. In the first of the ballet companies presented, two young choreographers, a great ballerina and eight skilful dancers, showed unusual mastery of their art. G. C. Menotti is to be praised for having fostered the U.S. dance art and gathered together, with Nora Kaye as leading dancer, such a brilliant new company.

The "American Ballet" which interpreted four ballets, seemed to be more at ease than last year's group which is due, in our opinion, to such dancers as Scott Douglas, Glen Tetley, the exotic Carmen de Lavallade, the tiny, incomparable Sondra Lee and the romantic Bambi Linn. Outstanding, above all, Nora Kaye displaying a very mature talent, gave the performance a superior, dignified and dramatic pattern. In every single appearance, Nora Kaye displayed superior skill and personality, which permitted her to magically dominate the stage at all times.

Herbert Ross is a choreographer who works along the line of the already classical tradition of modern ballet, somewhat in the wake of a Balanchine and Tudor. He has shown a keen, vigorous style, well supported by inner dramatic spurs, as to be found in Antony Tudor, and well balanced with the exacting intelligence and sobriety familiar to Balanchine.

It was precisely Tudor whom the choreography of *Dark Songs* recalled to mind. Set to music by Ernest Krenek, this ballet's motive is provided by the first verse of Dante's "Divina Commedia."

In illustrating the confessions by three human beings and the reasons of their bewilderment, it is fully rewarding, especially by way of the felicitous inspiration and perfect concurrence of classic and modern styles.

*Serenade for Seven Dancers*, on music by Leonard Bernstein, is a kind of rhythmical interpretation of Plato's "Convito," possibly inspired by a reading of that famous dialogue. To set up this choreography, Ross referred to a classic and abstract pattern of dance which contributed in supplying this ballet with grace and suspense.

*Angel Head*, adapted from Allen Ginsburg's poem, first recorded by Chico Hamilton on a jazz anthology, was the first ballet based on the "Beat Generation" being presented in Italy. The choreography, which delineates the most striking aspects of the "beat" groups, appeared quite inventive on the whole, and, at times, even poignant, thus giving rise to a tense suggestive atmosphere filled with emotion. The performance was very impressive and most interesting, due to the fact that no scenery was used: instead, Herman Goustin set up a few wonderful photographs reproduced on slides and projected from behind stage.

John Butler, the author of a single work on this programme, *The Sybil*, set to music by Carlos Surinach, succeeded in clear-cutting and refining the choreographic sketch of his mythical personages. Richard Lippold's scenery as well as the convincing interpretation of Carmen de Lavallade, Glen Tetley, Bambi Linn and Sondra Lee contributed in making this ballet more of a success than Butler's works gained last year.

The very sophisticated public attending the Festival showed great enthusiasm and praised the artistic and intellectual level of the performance, warmly cheering the dancers, the choreographers, and Maestro Terkanowsky, who proved to be a talented conductor.

### SPOLETO IS LEAFING THROUGH ALBUMS

The choreographic collaboration in a new kind of performance Menotti has chosen for Spoleto (*Album Leaves* the U.S.A. version and *Fogli d'Album* the European one—one world for each) a sort of "review-theatre minute," was much more in evidence with the Americans who distinguish themselves so brilliantly in the dance field. Whereas *Fogli* had no choreographer and only registered the brief appearance of Raimonda Orselli as nymph in "Masque Ostendais" by Ghelderdoe, *Leaves* was almost entirely choreographed by John Butler who was fortunate to have among others Sondra Lee as dancer, comedienne and actress, three assignments which she solved most brilliantly.

The presentation of each single sketch was preceded by a sort of bum-hobo who appropriately mimed and gestured each title of the forthcoming number in writing it on the amusingly designed front curtain. The idea might have been taken from the Village edition of the "Threepenny Opera" but if not original, was most welcome. The whole *Leaves* were designed by Jack Venza with some costumes by Tom Keogh and it gave the show a unity of style which *Fogli* lacked.

*The Jerome Robbins new ballet and programme were included in our previous issue.*

## FLORENCE

THE big open-air spectacle in Florence's most beautiful 16th century Boboli Gardens, has become by now a most welcome tradition. Aurel Milloss helped by some excellent local dancers and several international soloists showed three of his new choreographies cut to fit the enormous stage and to please a large uninitiated audience—present mostly to enjoy a cool evening in beautiful surroundings, rather than having ambitions of being balletomanes.

*The Eternal Island* to music by Bach was a "ballet blanc" of the classic, not romantic period. Shepherds and shepherdesses wove their pleasant enchaînements in front of the green meadows and statues came to life. Nymphs, fauns and satyrs, gods and half-gods populated the happy island before retiring again on their pedestals. The corps de ballet was most disciplined and among the soloists young Italia Nati o must be especially noted, as well as Alberto Testa and Renato Fiumicelli.

*The Folly of Orlando*, after the poem by Ariosto has music by Goffredo Petrassi, one of Italy's foremost contemporary composers. Unfortunately it sounded like a fake "Sacre" by Stravinsky—and equally unfortunate was the scenery which showed a flatly painted forest in the midst of beautiful old (real!) trees . . . and costumes more suitable for a review than a ballet with such a serious theme. Lorenzo Ghiglia was responsible for this breach of taste. This should have been a "ballet d'action" but instead had the same abstract character as the ballet previously shown. Juan Giuliano danced the lead with technical ability and dramatic understanding, while Helene Trailine showed her virtuosity to best advantage

The last ballet, *Terzili Katicza*, is the result of a collaboration of three Hungarian artists: the choreographer Aurel Milloss, the composer Sandor Veress and the painter Istvan Pekary. It's a fairy-tale story of a young village girl who, after many adverse adventures, gets her Prince Charming. It's a lively ballet with comic and grotesque scenes at their best and a clever use of Hungarian folklore material. The work itself—as the other two—seemed overlong and repetitious, but again the well cast dancers made the watching of it all most pleasant. Carmen Panader, the lead, is a wistful little girl with great charm and a sound technique, and Giuseppe Urbani was an elegant and wholly believable prince in fairy-land. Excellent also the characterisations of Ludwig Durst as the old king and Enrico Sportiello as the captain.

The orchestra was conducted by Feruccio Scaglia without too much dynamics or

REPORT FROM

# Johannesburg

by MARY KENWOOD

*As we reported last month, at the end of the first week of Antonio's opening in Johannesburg a fire completely destroyed the Empire Theatre. By courtesy of the University of Witwatersrand the University Great Hall was placed at the Company's disposal. Our correspondent covers the second and third weeks' programmes below.*

The first night of Antonio's second programme at the University Great Hall was even more of a triumph, both for himself and his wonderful company, than the première had been, and Johannesburg critics have run out of superlatives in describing this peerless Spanish dancer.

The evening was almost pure delight from Carmen Rojas' superb carriage and haughty grace in *Rondena* which began the performance, to the final gay mêlée at the conclusion of *Los Serrannos de Vejer*.

The change of venue has not adversely affected either the company or the staging, and, as usual, particularly fine use was made of dramatic silhouettes. The grouping and static poses of this company are always striking.

*Las Cabales de Silverio* was notable for the use of brilliant splashes of colour contrasting with the sombre all-black costumes of the dancers, and for the clever lighting.

The sparkling suite of Basque Dances which followed was enthusiastically received, and spontaneous applause broke out as the curtains parted to reveal the gay and colourful traditional costumes with their hoops of flowers designed by Vicente Viudes. A particular favourite with the audience was the dance in which Rosita Segovia, Carmen Rojas, Carmen Rollan and Graciella Vasquez performed around, and even momentarily on, a full glass of "wine." This was a superb exhibition of the control and precision of their footwork.

If the evening proved anything, it was that this company excels in pure traditional dance and flamenco, and is perhaps less successful in ballets portraying incidents or ideas. In the case of *El Llanto*, apart from stating that the ballet was "In memory of Manuel de Falla," the programme was irritatingly vague, and we had to guess what it was all about. The brief appearance of a dancer in classic white ballet costume and on pointes seemed somewhat out of place here.

*Sortilegio de los Collares Dance mX1* was another instance of vagueness in the programme, but, in fact, turned out to be an eternal triangle theme, beautifully and passionately danced by Rosita Segovia, Paco Ruiz and Rodolfo Otero.

Paco Ruiz and Carmen Rollan were repeatedly recalled at the end of their delightful, gently droll suite of dances *Viva Navarra*. This was the first time we had seen Paco Ruiz reveal a lighter side, and he was well matched in Carmen Rollan.

The highlight of the whole evening was Antonio's Zapateado. So great was the ovation at the end of this dynamic and brilliant performance that he announced that he would perform another Zapateado without music. This second unbelievably glittering virtuoso exhibition excelled even the previous one and will remain in my memory as one of the great moments in a long ballet-going career.

To conclude the evening, a series of flamenco dances was performed. This included *Por Seguiriyas*—a superb combination of Antonio and Carmen Rojas in a performance which literally brought the house down.

Antonio's subsequent imaginary bullfighting scene was a triumph of skill and humour, and still further delighted the already vociferous audience.

With the allround excellence of his company, his own virtuosity, inimitable sense of humour, perfect timing and sureness of touch in sensing his audience's reactions, Antonio is producing nightly in Johannesburg scenes of enthusiasm such as I have not seen here before.

The third and final programme of Antonio's season commenced on Friday the 14th August. After the superlative second programme any other was bound to be a little disappointing.

Two excellent dramatic ballets were given during the evening, each in different vein, but equally effective.

But first we saw *Pas de Quatre* to music by Pablo Sorozabal. This was an excellent vehicle for displaying the varying talents of Rosita Segovia, Carmen Rojas, Carmen Rollan, and Graciella Vasquez, and the exquisite costumes based on originals of the XIX century were pure delight.

*Near the Guadalquivir*, an exciting work based on two poems of Federico Garcia Lorca, portrayed in tensely exciting and dramatic manner the imprisonment and death of Antonito el Camborio on his way to Seville. This was Spanish ballet at its best.

The third item on the programme was *Danzas Fantasticas*. The lilting, fascinating music by Joaquin Turina was enchanting, especially that for Antonio's solo variation, and was well matched by the imaginative choreography. At times there were moments which were vaguely reminiscent of Frederick Ashton's *Nocturne* although both mood and choreography were very different. The Dresdenesque Graciella Vasquez made a perfect contrast with the dark flamelike beauty of Rosita Segovia as the contestants for Antonio's attentions.

The last item was the superb *Los Serranos de Vejer* which was also included in the second programme. This was by far the favourite of the audience, and as usual the evening ended with vociferous applause.

Considering the difficulties of staging at the University Great Hall, where the large apron had to be utilised and therefore much of the scenery could not be used, the presentation of the show has been wonderful.

From Johannesburg, Antonio and his company go to Cape Town where they give a short season from the 25th August to the 5th September.

I was privileged to see Antonio creating some of the dramatic dances for the ballet to be included in the film of his life which he will make upon his return to Spain when he leaves South Africa.

Apparently as a small boy he had a great friend who later became a bullfighter. On returning home to Spain after a tour of America he found that this friend had been killed. This, together with the fact that bullfighting is such an important part of Spanish life, inspired the ballet.

This new work, based on a story by Villa Belda and with music by the contemporary young Spanish composer Cristobal Hallfter, has a title which, roughly translated, Antonio told me, means "Playing with the Bull", and I was deeply impressed by what I saw. It will be interesting to see the film which is being made by Spanish and English companies in collaboration.

The visit of this superb artist, who must be numbered among the great dancers of our time, has been a great occasion in the lives of Johannesburg balletomanes, who are all hoping he will come back to South Africa. However, although he said he has enjoyed his visit and hopes to return some time in the future, he has no plans for the present.

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**THE FESTIVALS**

*Continued from previous page*

dramatic understanding of the various scores. The most applauded scene was the beginning of *The Folly of Orlando* when the lights came up over a big expanse of green hills and a white mare with plume-helmeted knight zigzagged downhill in fast gallop.

TRUDY GOTH

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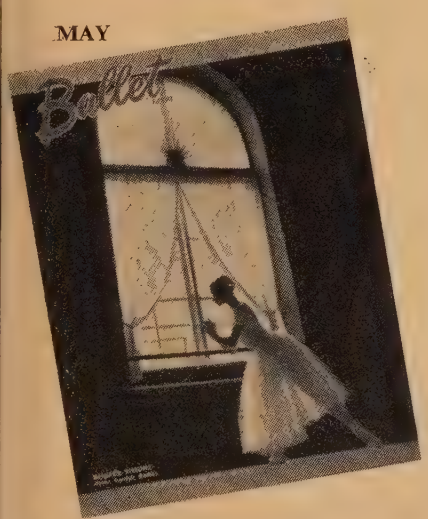


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# PROGRAMMES FOR THE MONTH

### THE ROYAL BALLET AT COVENT GARDEN

19th Oct. Mon. (eve) *Les Patineurs, Antigone* (World Premiere), *Pineapple Poll*
20th „ Tues. (eve) *Les Patineurs, Antigone, Pineapple Poll*
21st „ Wed. (eve) *Le Lac Des Cygnes,* (Fonteyn, Somes)
22nd „ Thur. (eve) *Coppelia* (Park, Burne), *Façade*
23rd „ Fri (eve) *Les Patineurs, Antigone, Pineapple Poll*
24th „ Sat. (eve) *Le Lac Des Cygnes* (Nerina, Blair)
26th „ Mon. (eve) *Le Lac Des Cygnes* (Fonteyn, Somes)
27th „ Tues. (eve) *Ballet Imperial, Antigone, Façade*
29th „ Thur. (eve) *Sylvia* (Fonteyn, Somes)
30th „ Fri. (eve) *Le Lac Des Cygnes* (Beriosova, MacLeary)

### THE ROYAL BALLET ON TOUR

**The Covent Garden Company**

W/c 28th Sept. (2 weeks) *Streatham Hill Theatre*

**The Touring Company of the Royal Ballet**

W/c 28th Sept. *Lyceum, Sheffield*
„ 5th Oct. *Royal Court Theatre, Liverpoo*
„ 12th „ *King's Theatre, Glasgow*
„ 19th „ *His Majesty's, Aberdeen*
„ 26th „ *King's Theatre, Edinburgh*

### BALLET RAMBERT ON TOUR

W/c 28th Sept. *Essoldo, Brighton*
„ 5th Oct. *Lyceum Theatre, Newport*
„ 19th „ *Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton*
„ 2nd Nov. *Arts Theatre, Cambridge*
„ 9th „ *Theatre Royal, Hanley*

### LECTURES

A course of Illustrated Lectures by Joan Lawson at the City Literary Institute, Stukeley Street, London, W.C.2, on Fridays, at 6 p.m., commencing 2nd October.

### FESTIVAL BALLET ON TOUR

Festival Ballet will open in Copenhagen on October 21st, followed by appearances in Malmo, Stockholm, Germany and Italy returning to London in December prior to the Christmas season at the Royal Festival Hall when they once again present The Nutcracker.

21st-27th Oct. Falkoner, Centret Teater, Copenhagen.

30th Oct.-1st Nov. Statteater, Malmo.

3rd-8th Nov. Royal Opera House, Stockholm.

### FESTIVAL BALLET CLUB

An Extraordinary General Meeting will be held at the Court Room, Caxton Hall, S.W.1, on Monday, 12th October at 7 p.m.


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# NEW BOOKS

**Reviewed by PIGEON CROWLE**

*Gagaku. By Robert Garfias.* (*Theatre Art Books U.S.A.* $1.00).

Gagaku is the last remaining example of a musical genre which once flourished throughout Asia from the seventh to the ninth century. Originally part of the folk music and dances of mainland Asia, it was modified and stylised by the Chinese who introduced it to Japan. There it became associated with the ceremonies and entertainments of the Imperial Court and certain larger shrines. As a result of this long ceremonial usage, an intense refinement and introspective quality has gradually been evolved and, designed for a specialized audience and for a philosophic, moral or religious purpose, all dramatic or entertainment elements, as such, have disappeared. Its interest lies in its simplicity and grace, its smooth, continuous, almost hypnotic, motion which has been stripped of all excess movement, its emphasis on sparsity and refinement, and the strength of spirit of its performers.

Present-day Gagaku musicians and dancers are direct descendants of twelfth century Court performers, while many can trace their lineage back to the Chinese and Korean exponents who first introduced the art to Japan. But today the number of young men who are still willing to devote their lives to a continuation of the art is rapidly decreasing.

The costumes are rich and beautiful in material and design and brilliant in colour. Some still in use are up to three hundred years old but, alas, no craftsman today can reproduce the exquisite dyes and glowing brocades of the past, and so they must be replaced by those of an inferior quality.

In spite of the vicissitudes engendered by the changing values of our times, Gagaku though endangered still flourishes, and its latest dances were created for the recent Royal wedding.

This slim paper-backed book describes the history and development of the art and many of its dances. It is excellently reproduced and illustrated and has an introduction by Lincoln Kirstein.

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# RECORDINGS

**Reviewed by . . . . BEDFORD CROWLE**

### MISSA BREVIS

José Limon set his ballet to Kodaly's music for a shortened Mass, HMV. ALP1687, which is most welcome to the recorded catalogue, particularly as it is conducted by the composer. It is a strong and emotional work which appeals readily to both heart and ear. The soloists have their occasional problems and the recording is a little rough at the centres but neither of these difficulties prevent this being a most interesting and enjoyable record.

### CHRISTMAS

The twelve piano pieces of Tchaikovsky's Op. 37a., *The Months*, may be a little uneven, but they have an abundance of melodic charm, which together with Lev Oberin's sensitive playing, on Parlophone PMA1046, transports them to a far higher level than seems reasonable to expect. I doubt if this disc is bettered for many a long day either in performance or recording. December was used for Pavlova's delectable divertissement, *Christmas*, while to October, Nijinska devised an elegiac solo for Markova.

### DIAGRAMME

Bach's music often serves ballet very felicitously and Ashton's *The Wise Virgins* is a first class example. Many ballets have been inspired by the famous *Brandenburg Concertos*—Charrat's *Diagramme* by No. 6, May O'Donnell's *Illuminations* by No. 5, Mark Ryder's *Dance Drama* by No. 3 etc.—and now Decca have issued new recordings of Münchinger and the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra covering the complete set, LXT5512–3. I enjoyed Münchinger's previous performances which were comparatively straightforward but very stylish in conception—the present discs show an all round improvement which I have no hesitation in recommending.

### POUR LA HARPE

The main reason I include this disc issued by Capitol, P8401, is that many others will want to revel, as I have, in the exquisite playing of that great harpist, Marcel Grandjany. It is beautifully recorded and a real asset to one's collection. This is in spite of the fact that not one of the thirteen pieces of French music were originally written for the harp. There is a strong ballet connection in so much as it includes, Debussy's *First Arabesque* used by Rodrigues in *Iles des Sirènes*, the same composer's *Danse de Poupée* from *La Boîte à Joujoux*, and the minuet from Ravel's *Tombeau de Couperin* in Alan Carter's *Vier mal Vier*.

### INVITATION TO THE DANCE

Although only Falla's *Three-Cornered Hat* (suite II) was originally composed for ballet, Decca LXT5499 is essentially a ballet record. Weber's music had its contribution to make to Fokine's masterpiece, *Le Spectre de la Rose*, while Nijinska, Dolin, Greco and others have pitted their ingenuity against Ravel's tour de force, *Bolero*. Finally there is the same composer's *Alborada del Gracioso*, the most popular piece from his work, *Miroirs*. This has also attracted choreographers of whom Lifar and Pilar Lopez have been as successful as any. Albert Wolff, conducting the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra, does not necessarily give the most satisfying performances that one has heard, but anyone wanting these items on one record will be well content.

### SUMMER INTERLUDE

I enjoyed Michael Somes' simple but too brief excursion into the world of choreography—*Summer Interlude*, with Respighi's *Ancient Airs and Dances for Lute*. This was also de Mille's choice of music for her trashy ballet, *Three Virgins and a Devil*, which was certainly not worthy of someone of her intelligence. However, the performance given by the Virtuosi di Roma under Fasano, HMV ALP1641, is at the opposite end of the scale. They couple it with Marcheselli's *Concerto No.* 1, Albinoni's *Concerto No.* 9 and Bassani's *Canzoni Amorose*, so that those who enjoy the seventeenth century Italian composers and their influence will have a disc to cherish.

### SYMPHONIC VARIATIONS

To conclude a batch of fine discs is Pye's little seven inch-er, CEC32035, and Bela Siki with the Pro Arte Orchestra under Goossen's baton, gives a beautifully thought-out rendering of Franck's music which will always be linked with Ashton's masterpiece. Balance and recording are very good and the turn-over, inevitably irritating, is well placed.


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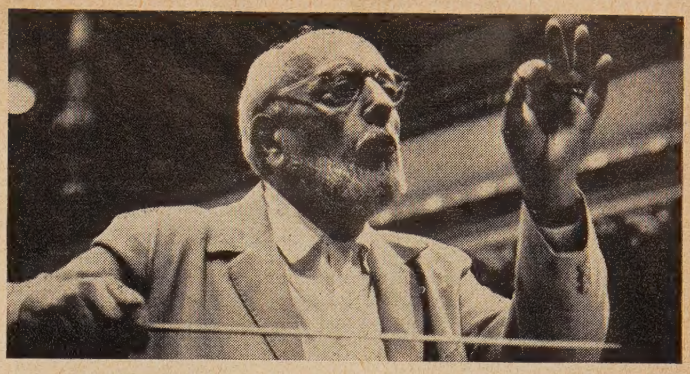

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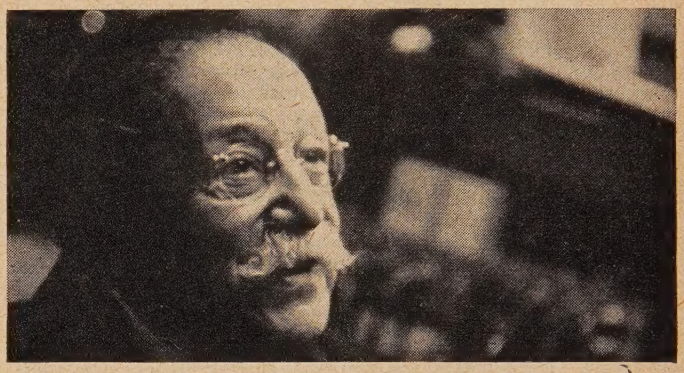

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# The Young Dancer's Page

## VENICE

THE annual performance by the Diaghilev School of Classical Dancing, directed by Professor Turitto Alessandri, took place on the 27th June at the Teatro Malibran before a crowded house.

The juniors, some 40 of them ranging in age from about four to 14, were shown to great advantage in a most charming little crinoline ballet called *Children's Games* with music by Tchaikovsky and Delibes. The choreography by Signora Alessandri had been cleverly devised in that each game or pastime consisted of a short pas de trois, each succeeding trio exploiting more difficult steps, until finally the three most advanced pupils were seen in quite elaborate turns and enchainements. For the coda the various trios now assembled with balloons and little tennis rackets, danced to waltz tempo, the tiniest spinning round like tops, while the others danced round them in a riot of colour to bring down the curtain.

In the dance with scarfs Signora Alessandri's daughter, Antonella showed much improvement, and the most advanced trio, Liviana Berti, Monica Rotelli and Adele Toffoletti foreshadowed their future appearance as soloists.

Little was it thought when the curtain now rose on Act 2 of *Swan Lake* that we were about to witness two such outstanding performances by Carla Calcaterra as Odette/Odile and Carlo Preti as Prince Siegfried, that at times they challenged comparison with Fonteyn/Somes or Danilova/Petroff in the same two roles. This is no exaggeration, yet how to explain a seeming miracle? At the time of last year's performance Carla Calcaterra was a schoolgirl, a graceful enough dancer, but raw and unsure of her balance. She had never performed any leading role. Last night, when she entered as Odette, I saw before me an imperious figure that commanded the stage the moment she trod it, and who never once faltered during the entire performance. Not only was the grand manner evident in her every movement, but also an indescribable voluptuousness of port de bras during her slow turns in pas de deux. Her appearance reminds one somewhat of Fonteyn, but her line is longer and on a par with that of Danilova; and in this particular role she could probably outclass any other dancer in Italy. At the conclusion of the Act II pas de deux both dancers were recalled to receive an ovation, an almost unprecedented honour in Venice.

Her partner, Carlo Preti, who only joined the school last year, almost surpasses my ideal of a danseur noble. Tall, slender, with a small head of singular beauty and refinement, he supported Calcaterra with the utmost tenderness and grace. His poise and features remind one a little of Skibine. His timing is perfect, but when dancing alone he is inclined to lower his head, which gives a hunched effect. His elevation is weak, but with practice he should acquire more strength and spring. His advent to the school has enabled Signora Alessandri to present a ballet on equal terms with a professional company.

The pas de quatre of the cygnets was turned into a pas de six and very neatly performed by Gabriella Cardazzo, Eleonora dal Prato, Alessandra Fontolan, Mariele Lizier, Riccarda Lizier, and Liù Orioli. Unfortunately they had been made to wear ill-fitting white wigs, which in some cases merely looked like hoods and which entirely altered the girls' natural expression and made their heads much too large. I was infinitely relieved to see that Odette wore the customary two strips of plumage.

The younger dancers, charmingly led by Stefania Stefanutti, constituted the corps de ballet. As for the young men, the Prince's hunting companions, they were good in their mime of shooting at the beginning of this scene, but later their arm movements were too jerky and occasionally gave the impression of a concerted series of semaphore signals. Renzo Martini as the Prince's squire gave an animated performance but needs to vary his expression.

Act III was chiefly given over to the various dances by the guests, in this case danced as solos by the six coryphées. Odile and the Prince had little to do, no Black Swan pas de deux, which was a great pity since Calcaterra's transformation into Odile was most subtle and her entrance with Rothbart (Mimmo Boato) extremely dramatic.

Of the six soloists I was particularly impressed by the poetry and refinement of movement shown by Mariele Lizier. She is a pretty girl with a perfect figure and when she can overcome a certain shyness and reveal more personality her dancing should give infinite pleasure. Eleonora dal Prato in a lovely green bodice and tutu, showed personality and much improvement in her dancing.

The vision of Odette was postponed until the very last moment, when the Prince realises he has been deceived. This was extremely effective and dramatically an improvement on the usual three appearances of Odette.

In Act IV, probably due to excitement, Calcaterra overdid the anguished arm flutterings in her pas seul. The lyrical mood was changed into melodrama and the writhing arms savoured too much

*Contd. at foot of next column.*

## LONDON

### DEMONSTRATION BY THE CECCHETTI SOCIETY

This year's Cecchetti Demonstration, held at the Rudolf Steiner Theatre on 29th July, had the great merit of being clearly visible, with good stage lighting that showed up the young dancers to advantage.

It was pleasant to see once again a number of the best entries to the Choreographic Competition—one of the Cecchetti Society's major contributions to the development of British ballet. By far the most intriguing item was the winner of the junior section, *What Shall I Do for the Choreographic ?*, arranged by Janice Wright (pupil of Diana Barker). The very small twelve-year-old choreographer-dancer showed her torments of mind as she tried out a succession of ideas —notably a sentimental daisy-picking number (showing a wickedly satirical impression of a good many junior entries in earlier years), a classical item in the grand manner (à la Bolshoi) and an amusing satire on corny musical comedy dancing.

The Cecchetti scholars did well in a romantic Prelude, with choreography by Nesta Brooking that made an interesting use of arm movements in canon—that is, with the same line repeating itself with a second group of dancers after an interval less than that of a complete phrase of movement, so that a contrapuntal effect was created. Ann Whitley stood out from the group because of her musicality (very important in choreography of this quality) and superb sense of line. The costumes (designed and executed by Erlund Hudson) showed this artist's characteristic wit and imagination, making striking effects with the simplest means: asymmetrical areas of bright colour appeared on either side of an imaginary line down the centre of the body.

In *Visions Fugitives* Michael Holmes presented four of the senior scholars (Vivienne Dodds, Rosalind Eyre, Janet Hodgkinson and Susan Salomon) in a suite of short dances in different rhythms and moods, making good use of the talents at his disposal.

The show ended with the performance of the pas de deux from Act III of *Coppélia* by Antoinette Sibley and Graham Usher. It was a great pleasure to see these two young dancers (both of whom were at school themselves not so long ago) in these surroundings; and there were many lessons which the Cecchetti pupils could derive from watching their beautiful performances. **FERNAU HALL**

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**VENICE** *Continued*

of the Orient. But in the finale she and Preti were superb and the apotheosis became intensely moving as the Prince carried Odette through serried ranks of kneeling swan-maidens to their abode of perpetual felicity.

Beyond all question this is the finest production Signora Alessandri has given us, and the tremendous ovation she received was compensation, I trust, for all the thought and hard work she had lavished on this best of all ballets—*Swan Lake*.

Yet another ballet after such a sensational success was almost bound to be an anti-climax. In order to display her other star pupil, Sandra Costa, Signora Alessandri had felt obliged to create a ballet for her and had elected to give this after *Swan Lake*. I think she would have been better advised to lengthen *Swan Lake* a little by giving the role of Odile to Costa, and, including the black swan pas de deux. Then no other ballet would have been needed, and the performance would have finished at the peak of success.

As it was, a long Spanish ballet *España* was given, with music from Turina, Albeniz, Grandos, R. Korsakov. The choreography was not sufficiently varied to cope with so much music, nor were the dancers, accustomed as they are to the classical style, able to adapt themselves convincingly to the Spanish dance idiom. Too late came the only redeeming feature—a cleverly staged buffo bullfight, in which Angelo Sbrilli as the bull and Carlo Preti as the matador danced with confidence and animation.

Sandra Costa as the girl looked ravishing, but she is not suited to this style of dancing which demands strong acting ability, change of expression, and an ever varied play with the hands and arms. I think this had been realised because at one moment she suddenly appeared in tights and short tutu and performed a scintillating classical pas seul completely at variance with the atmosphere and setting of the ballet.

One girl, Alessandra Fontolan, showed in her solo what she is capable of in this idiom. But I now learn that she herself is half Spanish. She knows how to use her eyes, move her arms, her fan, and the long Spanish dress, of which none of the others had much idea. Should Signora Alessandri ever consider giving a Spanish or character ballet again, I hope this girl will be given a proper chance to show what she can do.

Mario Ronchese and Renoit made a simple and effective decor for this ballet, which I hope will be used again. **ROBERT PATERSON**

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